Maze of Death

by Philip Buckland

Dahlia Halver at the Apollo Bureau

Maze of Death

Dahlia Halver at the Apollo Bureau -
A Spy Adventure

by Philip Buckland

Also by Philip Buckland:

<u>The Frank Hurley series</u>

The Cranston Occurrence
The Hiders
Lois Latham
Invisible, We're Here
The Live End
He's Back in Town

<u>The Apollo Bureau spy series</u>

A Scientist is Missing
Expose to Danger
The Difference

<u>The Rich Chandler series</u>

Incommunicado
The Burglar
Discovery on Sunset Drive

Copyright 2020 Philip Buckland

CHAPTER I

The country club was in Washington, D.C.

The President of the United States stepped out of the rest room after he had relieved himself. Now he walked through the hall to go back into the dining room and rejoin his wife and his daughter and his daughter's husband and the other people who had been invited to the President's daughter's wedding. The reception of the wedding was being held here at the country club.

When the President reached the end of the hall, he stopped when he saw his friend--Senator Bill Ludlow--standing inside the lobby of the country club and talking to another man. The President didn't recognize the other man, though. He had never seen or

heard of him before.

Bill was tall, slim, had brown hair, blue eyes, a stern face, and he was wearing a tan suit and a white shirt and a mahogany brown tie and mahogany brown leather shoes.

The other man was tall, robust, had black hair, a matching mustache that split his sharp features in two, and pale green eyes, and he was wearing a black suit and a gray shirt and a black tie and black leather shoes.

The President noticed that Bill looked upset when he was talking to the other man. And the other man was showing Bill some pictures and some papers, too. But the President didn't hear what it was Bill and the other man were talking about, and he didn't see what was in the pictures and what the papers were about, either. Then he saw the other man give Bill the pictures and the papers and an envelope and leave. After that he saw Bill put the pictures and the papers into the envelope, and then he saw Bill start

to leave the lobby so he could go back into the dining room and rejoin the rest of the people who had been invited to the President's daughter's wedding. The President knew that Bill was one of the people the President's daughter had invited to her wedding.

"Bill," the President said.

Bill stopped when he heard his name. Then he saw the President. Then the President walked over to Bill.

"Bill," the President repeated. "How are you?"

"Fine," Bill said. But this time Bill didn't look upset. "You, sir?"

"Fine. I couldn't help but see the man you were talking to. Is everything all right?"

"Yes."

"You're sure?" The President didn't say anything about the pictures and the papers that Bill and the other man had talked about, though. Maybe they were something. Or, maybe they were nothing.

"I'm sure."

"All right. How's it going on investigating those businessmen?" The President knew that Bill was looking into these businessmen's activities to find out if they were conducting some criminal operations.

"The investigation is over. I found out that these businessmen aren't conducting any kind of criminal operation."

"I see."

"Well, I'd better get back in there before they forget what I look like."

"Of course."

Then Bill went back into the dining room.

The President wondered about what Bill and the other man had talked about and why Bill had looked upset when he had talked to the other man and what those pictures and papers were about. Then the President realized that something was wrong.

CHAPTER II

My house was out in the country and not far from downtown Washington.

I was here at my place now. Sitting inside the living room and watching TV and keeping track of time while I waited for Jack Collins to show up and pick me up for our date tonight.

Jack was a stock broker. I had met him about three weeks ago. In town. When I had been shopping. I had gotten hungry at that time, and so I had gone somewhere to get something to eat.

When I had arrived at the coffee shop, I had gone into the coffee shop and had sat down at the counter and had ordered some coffee and a menu, and after I had looked at the menu and had ordered my lunch, I had seen Jack. He was sitting at the counter, too.

Eating bacon and eggs. Then I had smiled at him. I liked what I saw of him. Then I had spoken to him: "How are the eggs doin'?"

Jack had looked at me when he had heard me speak to him. Then he had smiled at me when he had seen me. He must have liked what he had seen of me. Then he had spoken to me: "The eggs are doin' fine."

Then Jack and I had continued talking to each other and had introduced ourselves to each other, and then, after that, we had gone out.

Now, about three weeks later, I heard something. I got up from the couch and went over to the window and peeked out of it to see what it was I heard. A car appeared and drove down the road and turned into the driveway of my place and drove up to my place, getting bigger and bigger with each passing second. Then, I recognized the car. It was Jack's brown Jaguar. I had driven in it with Jack before. Then, I looked at my watch. It told me it was the time that Jack

was going to come here to my place and pick me up at for our date tonight. Then, I saw the Jaguar come to a complete stop here in front of my place. Then, I saw who was in the Jaguar: Jack. Then I turned around and walked back to the TV and took the remote control off of the coffee table and turned off the TV with the remote control, and then I put the remote control back on the coffee table, and then I collected my purse and turned on the light in the living room, and then I stepped out of my house and closed the front door of my place, and then I took my keys out of my purse and locked the door, and then I put my keys back into my purse, and then I ran over to the Jaguar and got into it, and then Jack and I kissed, and then Jack and I pulled away from my place so we could leave my place and go keep our date tonight.

Ristorante Tosca was a wonderful Italian restaurant here in Washington and on F Street NW.

Jack and I were here at Tosca now. Sitting at a table and having Manzo for dinner, and washing it down with a fine red wine, and for dessert we had Panna Cotta.

We were here at the theatre now. Watching a movie called *The Inhabiters. The Inhabiters* was about these people who came from a dead planet and went to Earth, and now they're trying to start all over again on Earth.

We were here at a coffee shop now. Having cheeseburgers and washing them down with coffee and talking about the movie. We liked the movie very much.

We returned here to my place now. Then Jack brought his car to a complete in front of my place.

"I had a wonderful time," I told Jack and smiled at him.

"So did I," Jack told me and smiled at me.

"Would you like to come in for a night cap?"

Jack looked at his gold plated wrist

watch. Then he spoke to me: "I think I can do that. But I can't stay very long. I work tomorrow."

"I understand. Because of that, I won't keep you very long."

Jack smiled.

Jack and I were here inside my place now. Sitting inside the living room and having the nightcap and making another date. Then we made the date and went over to the computer to find out what movie we could see, and when we could see it, and what restaurant we could have dinner at, and when we could have dinner before we see the movie.

We found out what we wanted to know on the computer. Then we decided to have dinner and see the movie tomorrow night. After that, I turned the computer off. "Well," I said. Then I grabbed a hold of Jack's arm and looked at his watch. Then I spoke to Jack again: "I did say I wasn't going to keep you very long. You did say you work

tomorrow."

"Yes, I did."

"I'll walk you to your car."

Then Jack and I walked through my house so we could walk out to Jack's car. Jack was tall, slim, had light brown hair, green eyes, chiseled features, and he was wearing a brown suit, a light green shirt, no tie, open collar, and black leather shoes.

Jack and I were outside my place and standing here at Jack's car now.

We embraced and kissed. Then Jack got into his car and started it up, and then he waved and smiled at me, and I waved and smiled at him. Then Jack pulled away from my place and drove down the driveway and turn onto the street and drive down the street. And *I* walked back into my place and closed the door. After that I turned the TV on and poured myself a glass of red wine and went over to the couch and sat down on the couch and watched TV and sipped the wine. I wanted to have another glass of wine

before I went to bed.

After I finished the wine, I turned the TV off with the remote control and put the remote control and the wine glass on the coffee table, and then I got up from the couch and collected my purse, and then I left the living room to go into *my* room.

When I got here to my room, I went into it and closed the door and turned on the light. Then I put my purse on the dresser, and then I got undressed and got into my bathrobe and slippers, and then I went over to my makeup table and sat down at it, and then I removed my makeup and got up from the table and put my .357 Castle Magnum underneath the pillow, and then I turned off the light and got out of my bathrobe and slippers and got into bed and went to sleep. Without setting the alarm clock. I had no reason for getting up at a certain time tomorrow. Because tomorrow was another day for me to do whatever I wanted to do. I wasn't working right now, and I didn't know

when I was going to go back to work. I could go back to work at anytime. I had two jobs that I did whenever I was needed.

One of them was freelance reporter.

The other job was a secret job, a job that I hadn't told Jack or anyone else I had because I couldn't tell Jack or anyone else I had this job, a job that I was sworn to secrecy about.

A few hours later, I woke up. Then I looked at the small electric alarm clock on one of my bedside tables to see what time it was now: nine o-two. Then I got out of bed and into my bathrobe and slippers to go have breakfast and watch TV.

I was sitting here inside the living room now. I had made and had eaten breakfast and had watched TV. Now I was sipping my fourth cup of coffee and continued watching TV.

The landline phone rang. I looked to where I heard it and listened. Then, I realized that the landline phone that was

ringing right now wasn't my own personal landline phone that was here inside the living room. Instead, the landline phone that was ringing right now was the other landline phone, the other landline phone that was hidden somewhere else here at my place, the other landline phone that had to do with my secret job, the job that I hadn't told Jack or anyone else I had because I couldn't tell Jack or anyone else I had this job, the job that I was sworn to secrecy about. I ran to where that other landline phone was so I could answer it.

CHAPTER III

The ringing was coming from inside my room.

I reached my room and opened the door and walked into my room and closed the door. After that I walked into the closet and closed and locked the door of the closet, and then I walked over to the other side of the closet and pressed a button underneath the shelf in the closet, and then a portion of the wall I was standing next to slid back and revealed my Apollo Bureau room. That was what I called *this* room. Because inside this room I did things that I could do inside a room; computer work, filing, looking at files, making and taking phone calls, checking or selecting equipment, etc., or anything else that I could do inside this room that had to do with the Apollo Bureau. The Apollo

Bureau was a top secret American organization that got orders directly from the President of the United States.

My purple landline phone was inside my Apollo Bureau room. It was on a table against the wall and on the other side of the Apollo Bureau room. The purple landline phone was the direct line to all Apollo Bureau personnel. There was a red landline phone, too. That phone was the direct line to the President of the United States. But only Mrs. Ruth Kincaid had and used the red landline phone. Because she was the head of the Apollo Bureau.

My purple landline phone was still ringing. I walked into my Apollo Bureau room, and then I pressed a button on the wall inside my Apollo Bureau room and next to the portion of the wall that had slid back and had revealed my Apollo Bureau room, and then that portion of the wall slid back into place and concealed my Apollo Bureau room. Then I walked over to my purple

landline phone and picked up the receiver of the phone and said my name.

"Good morning, Dahlia. It's Tina," said Tina Sutton, Mrs. Kincaid's secretary. "Please scramble."

Then I pressed the scrambler button on my purple landline phone and spoke to Tina again: "Scrambled."

"Mrs. Kincaid needs to see you," Tina continued. "We have a new assignment from the President."

"I'm on my way," Then I replaced the receiver of my purple landline phone.

I'm Dahlia Halver. I'm an agent for the Apollo Bureau. I work for the Preventive Tasks Department of the Apollo Bureau. The job of the Preventive Tasks Department of the Apollo Bureau is to keep someone from doing something or keep something from happening any way it can in the course of a mission. Because this department of the Apollo Bureau looks into compromising situations. Anything dangerous, suspicious,

or disreputable.

The next thing I did was leave my Apollo Bureau room and enter the closet, and then I pressed the same button underneath the shelf of the closet that had made the portion of the wall slide back and reveal my Apollo Bureau room, and then that portion of the wall slid back into place. Now my Apollo Bureau room was concealed. Then I ran over to the other side of the closet and unlocked and opened the door, and then I stepped out of the closet and into my room and closed and locked the door of the closet, and then I ran out of my room and ran over to the door of my room and unlocked it and opened it, and then I ran out of my room and into the living room and took the remote control off of the coffee table and turned the TV off with the remote control, and then I put the remote control back on the coffee table and picked up the receiver of my own personal landline phone and called Jack and told him I wasn't going to be able to keep our date for

tonight. Something came up and I had to take care of it.

"I'm sorry to hear that," Jack said after I had finished. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

"No. I'm afraid not. It's a private matter. I gotta go now," Then I replaced the receiver of my own personal landline phone, and then I took my cup of coffee off of the coffee table and drank all of the coffee all at once instead of gradually, and then I put the coffee cup back on the coffee table, and then I ran out of the living room and back into *my* room and got out of my bathrobe and slippers, and then I ran out of *my* room and into the bathroom and took a shower. After that, I ran out of the bathroom and back into *my* room and put on my makeup and got dressed, and then I collected my purse and ran out of my room.

I was running through my place now. So I could run out of my place and get into my garage and get into my Mazda and go over to

the central station of the Apollo Bureau and find out from Mrs. Kincaid what the new assignment from the President was.

I was driving away from my place and over to Apollo Bureau CHQ without speeding so I won't be noticed now. I had to. I was a secret agent.

The Realm Insurance Company was in downtown Washington. On 14th Street. It was in the business of insuring things in general. But the Realm Insurance Company wasn't the Realm Insurance Company. Instead, the Realm Insurance Company was the cover name for Apollo Bureau CHQ.

Mrs. Kincaid's office was on the top floor of Apollo Bureau CHQ.

Mrs. Kincaid was here inside her office now. Sitting behind her desk and looking at some papers and penning her way through them.

I walked into her office and saw what she was doing.

Mrs. Kincaid looked up from doing her

paperwork when she heard the front door of her office open and saw me come in. "Good morning, Dahlia," she said to me.

"Good morning, Mrs. Kincaid," I said to her. "Tina told me we have a new assignment from the President."

"That's right, we do. Have a seat, will you? I'll be right with you." Then Mrs. Kincaid resumed her paperwork.

And *I* closed the door to Mrs. Kincaid's office and walked over to her desk and sat down in front of it and placed my purse on the floor and crossed my right leg over my left one.

Mrs. Kincaid finished her paperwork, and then she dropped her pen on her desk and sat back in her chair, and then she took the remote control off of her desk and aimed it at the TV built into the wall and turned the TV on with the remote control. Now Mrs. Kincaid and I were looking at the image on the screen of the TV. It was of Bill.

"This is . . . " Mrs. Kincaid started to tell

me.

"Senator Bill Ludlow," I said.

"Yes," Mrs. Kincaid continued. "He's a friend of the President's." Then Mrs. Kincaid told me what the President had seen Bill and the other man do at the country club, and about what the President and Bill had talked about at the country club after the other man had talked to Bill, and after the other man had given Bill the pictures and the papers, and after the other man had left Bill.

I wondered about all of this.

"The President wants us to look into everything he saw Senator Ludlow and this other man do at the country club, and what the President and Bill talked about after Bill and this other man did at the country club," Mrs. Kincaid continued. "The President has reason to believe there's something wrong."

"I see," I said after Mrs. Kincaid had finished. "Why doesn't the President himself look into what he saw Senator Ludlow and this other man do at the country club, and

the conversation he had with Senator Ludlow about the other man and the businessmen after the man left the country club?"

"Because it doesn't look like there was anything illegal going on when Senator Ludlow was talking to this other man, and it doesn't look like there was anything illegal going on that had to do with the conversation that the President had with Senator Ludlow about the other man and the businessmen that Senator Ludlow was investigating after the man left the country club, either. And Senator Ludlow could say whatever he wants about both of the occurrences. And he didn't have to show the President the contents of that envelope the man gave Senator Ludlow and Senator Ludlow saw the contents of the envelope, and he didn't have to say anything about the contents of that envelope, either. And the President's conducting a public investigation of these occurrences could cause more harm

instead of good. Senator Ludlow and the other man could say whatever they want about what they did at the country club, and they could hide or destroy whatever evidence they have of what they did at the country club, and Senator Ludlow could say whatever he wants about the conversation he had with the President about the other man and the businessmen that Senator Ludlow was investigating after the other man left the country club, and destroy or hide whatever evidence he has that has to do with the conversation that he and the President had about the other man and the businessmen that Senator Ludlow was investigating after the man left the country club."

"And because of these reasons the President wants us to conduct a secret investigation of what Senator Ludlow and this other man did at the country club and the conversation that the President had with Senator Ludlow about the other man and

the businessmen Senator Ludlow was investigating after the other man left the country club."

"That's right. We found out who the other man is that talked to Senator Ludlow at the country club and showed Senator Ludlow the pictures and the papers and gave the pictures and the papers to Senator Ludlow from the description of the other man the President gave us," Then Mrs. Kincaid pressed another button on the remote control, and then another image appeared on the screen of the TV, and then Mrs. Kincaid and I looked at the image. This image was of the other man who had talked to Bill at the country club and had showed Bill the pictures and the papers and had given the pictures and the papers to Bill.

"Amos Montrose, millionaire financier," I said.

"That's right," Mrs. Kincaid confirmed. "Do you know him?"

"No. But I've heard of him. Now what

business would a U.S. senator have with a millionaire financier?"

"I don't know. But whatever the business is, it's not good if the millionaire financier had a conversation with Senator Ludlow and showed Senator Ludlow some pictures and papers that upset Senator Ludlow. If we can find out what's in those pictures and what those papers are about, that would help."

"Yes, it would."

"What we've done so far to find out what we need to know are run background checks on Senator Ludlow and Montrose and put the both of them under twenty four hour surveillance. Senator Ludlow is clean. So is Montrose. And we've been following Senator Ludlow and Montrose wherever they go, and watching whatever they're doing. But so far we discovered that Montrose hasn't done anything unusual that has to do with what he did at the country club with Senator Ludlow. And Senator Ludlow hasn't done anything unusual that has to do with *he* did

at the country club with Montrose."

"I see."

"You'll be using your standard cover story on this assignment: Dahlia Halver, freelance reporter. But at the moment, you're on vacation. And you have no desire to work for the next two weeks. You've done enough work as it is, and now you want to take a vacation from work." Then Mrs. Kincaid gave me a couple of files and spoke to me again: "This is the file on the President's report of what happened at the country club, and this is the file on those businessmen. It contains the information on those men, and the report on the surveillance we've conducted on them so far. We're still putting them under twenty four hour surveillance."

I looked through the files. "I'm going to start my assignment with Montrose. It looks as though the answer's with him."

"All right."

"Anything else, Mrs. Kincaid?"

"No. That's it. Good luck, Dahlia."

"Thank you, Mrs. Kincaid."

"You're welcome, Dahlia," Then Mrs. Kincaid resumed her paperwork, and I collected the files and my purse and uncrossed my legs and left Mrs. Kincaid's office.

I was here at my place and here inside my Apollo Bureau room now. Reading the files Mrs. Kincaid had given me. But they didn't tell me anymore than what Mrs. Kincaid had told me. The businessmen were just as clean as Bill and Montrose. And the surveillance reports on their movements told me that there was nothing unusual about their movements. The businessmen hadn't said or done anything unusual. Then I put both of the files that Mrs. Kincaid had given me into one of my filing cabinets here inside my Apollo Bureau room, and then I got on my computer to find out what I can about Montrose. Maybe whatever I learn about him will help me carry out my assignment.

CHAPTER IV

The next day, here in downtown Washington, and here inside an espresso place, Montrose stood at the counter and ordered and paid for and waited for his caramel Latte. He was on his lunch break right now. He was wearing a black suit, a pale yellow shirt, a black tie, and black leather shoes.

The girl who had made Montrose his caramel Latte gave Montrose his caramel Latte, and then Montrose turned around so he could go to his table and read his newspaper and sip his Latte--and then he bumped into me and spilled his Latte all over my dress. Then Montrose looked shocked at what he saw; and *I* looked shocked at what I saw, too.

"I am so sorry," Montrose said to me.

"Let's go to the nearest dry cleaner and get that dress cleaned. I'll pay the bill."

"Yeah," I said. "I think that's a good idea." Then I buttoned my coat so no one would see the stain, and Montrose went over to his table and collected his newspaper, and then Montrose and I left the espresso place and walked through town and looked around for the nearest dry cleaner; we also talked and introduced ourselves to each other.

We found the nearest dry cleaner and went into the shop. Then I unbuttoned my coat to show the dry cleaner the stain on my dress and told him how I had gotten the stain. Then he told me he could get the stain out right now and that it would take a few minutes. Then he asked for a phone number so he could tell us he had gotten the stain out of the dress, and then I gave him my personal cell phone number and not my Apollo Bureau cell phone number, and then the man wrote down the number on a pad on the counter. Then he pointed to a room

with his finger and told me I could take the dress off in that room, and then I went into that room and took my coat and the dress off, and then I put my coat back on and buttoned it up and collected my dress and my purse and came back out and gave the dress to the dry cleaner, and then Montrose and I left the shop.

Montrose and I were here at another espresso place now. Sitting at a table and sipping espressos that Montrose had gotten for the both of us while the dry cleaner was dry cleaning my dress.

"So you're Dahlia Halver, freelance reporter, huh?" Montrose said to me.

"That's right," I admitted and smiled.

"I've read most of your articles," Then Montrose told me what articles I had written that he had read and that he liked them."

"Well, thank you," I said and smiled.

"You're welcome. Are you looking into something to report right now?"

"No. I'm on vacation right now. And all I

want to do for the next two weeks is do whatever *I* want to do. I do not want to do any work for the next two weeks. I've done enough work as it is."

"Well, I can understand that."

"And you're Amos Montrose, millionaire financier. I've heard of you. You've really done quite well. I've read about your achievements in the newspapers and magazines."

"Well, thank you."

"You're welcome."

"I like what I've done. I still like what I do."

"I imagine you do," I said.

"And I imagine *you* like what *you* do."

I smiled. "Yes, I do. But as I said, I don't want to do my job for the next two weeks."

"Yes, you did say that. You also said that you want to do whatever *you* want to do for the next two weeks," Then Montrose took his black alligator wallet out of his pocket and took a card out of the wallet and it to

me, and I looked at the card, and then Montrose spoke to me again: "Well, maybe I can help you do anything but work for the next two weeks."

I smiled at Montrose and spoke to him: "Maybe you can."

My personal cell phone rang. I took it out of my purse and said hello.

It was the dry cleaner. He told me that the stain had been removed from my dress, and so I could go get the dress. Then I told the dry cleaner that I was going to go get my dress. After that, we hung up, and then I told Montrose about the conversation that the dry cleaner and I had just had about my dress.

Montrose and I were here at the dry cleaner's place now. The dry cleaner gave me my dress, and then I looked at the dress, and then I smiled. I liked what I saw. The stain that had been inside the dress was completely gone. Then I collected the dress and left the counter so I could go into the

other room and get into the dress, and Montrose paid the dry cleaning bill for the dress.

A few minutes later, I walked out of the room, smiling, and this time my coat was unbuttoned, revealing my dress. Then I rejoined Montrose, and then Montrose and I left the dry cleaning place.

Montrose and I were here at a coffee shop now. Montrose had told me he hadn't had lunch because of the accident he and I had had, and he had asked me if I'd like to have lunch with him, and I had told him I'd like to, and then we had come here to the coffee shop to have lunch. Now Montrose and I were sitting at a booth and having coffee and making a date while we waited for the cheeseburgers that Montrose had ordered for us to come. Then we made a date, and then Montrose and I looked at Montrose's newspaper for a movie we could see tonight, and then we decided what movie we could see tonight, and when

tonight we could see the movie, and then we talked about what restaurant we could have dinner at before we see the movie, and then we decided what restaurant we could have dinner at before we see the movie. Then we talked about other things, getting to know each other better.

We were eating our cheeseburgers now. And washing them down with more coffee.

I was here inside my car now. Montrose had walked me back to my car. He had told me he had wanted to walk me back to my car before he goes back to work. And then we had reached my car, and then I had gotten into my car, and then Montrose had left so he could go back to work. Now I took my yellow Apollo Bureau cell phone out of my purse and called Apollo Bureau CHQ so I could tell Mrs. Kincaid I had made contact with Montrose. The reason why my Apollo Bureau cell phone was yellow and not purple was because unlike the Apollo Bureau landline phones, the Apollo Bureau cell

phones were different colors. Each Apollo Bureau cell phone was a different color. Since the Apollo Bureau *was* a secret agency. Because the organization couldn't stick out like a sore thumb.

When I reached Apollo Bureau CHQ, Tina answered the phone.

"Hello. Tina?" I said. "It's Dahlia. Please scramble."

Then I heard Tina press the scrambler button on *her* purple landline phone. Then she spoke to me again: "Scrambled."

"Is Mrs. Kincaid in? I need to talk to her."

"She is. I'll connect you to her." Then I heard Tina make the connection.

"Hello, Dahlia?" Mrs. Kincaid said when she came on.

"Yes, it's Dahlia, Mrs. Kincaid," *I* said. Then I told Mrs. Kincaid I had made contact with Montrose and how I had made contact with him, and that I had made a date with him. Then I told Mrs. Kincaid when Montrose and I were going to have our date,

and what we were going to do on our date. "I don't have anything else to report right now," I then told Mrs. Kincaid. "What about you?"

"No. *I* don't have anything else to report right now."

"All right. Anything else, Mrs. Kincaid?"

"No."

"All right then. Bye."

"Bye," Then Mrs. Kincaid hung up.

So did I. Then I put my Apollo Bureau cell phone back into my purse and looked at my watch. Twelve thirty-six.

There wasn't anything else in my assignment I could do until I keep my date with Montrose. So I started up my car and drove out of the parking lot, and then I drove out of town and back to my place.

When I got here to my place, I went into the kitchen and made a pot of coffee, and then I went into *my* room and got undressed and got into my bathrobe and slippers, and then I removed my make up, and then I set

the alarm clock for a time I wanted to get up at later today, and then I put my gun underneath my pillow, and then I took my bathrobe and slippers off and got into bed and went to sleep. I needed to get some sleep right now. For my date with Montrose; another reason why I needed to get some sleep right now was because I might have to do something tonight that had to do with my assignment. And because of this, I was going to need to get some sleep; and another reason why I needed to get some sleep right now was because I had the chance to sleep right now. So I might as well sleep while I had the chance to sleep. I didn't know when I was going to get the chance to sleep again.

That was the way it was in the espionage business: whenever you have the chance to do something, you take it. Because you don't know when you'll get the chance to do it again.

The alarm clock buzzed. I stirred, then came awake and turned the alarm clock off

and looked at the time. The clock told me it was the time I wanted to get up at. Then I got out of bed and into my bathrobe and slippers and left my room and went into the kitchen and poured myself a cup of coffee. It was time now for me to wake up.

I was sitting here inside the living room now. Sipping coffee and watching TV and keeping track of time.

The time came for me to get ready for my date with Montrose. So I turned the TV off and went into my room and got out of my bathrobe and slippers and walked out of my room and into the bathroom and took a shower, and then I went out of the bathroom and back into *my* room and put on my bathrobe and slippers and put on my make up, and then I got out of my bathrobe and slippers and got dressed. Now I collected my purse and left my room and went into the living room and sat down on the couch and turned on the TV with the remote control and watched TV and kept track of time while

I waited for Montrose to show up and pick me up for our date tonight.

CHAPTER V

I heard something. I got up from the couch and went over to the window and peek out of it to see what it was I heard. A car appeared and drove down the road and turned into the driveway of my place and drove up to my place, getting bigger and bigger with each passing second. Then I saw the car. It was a navy blue Impala. But I didn't recognize *this* Impala. I had never seen it before. But then I realized that maybe *this* Impala belonged to Montrose. When I had gotten the information on Montrose so I could see what information about him I could use to help me carry out my assignment, I had found out from the information that Montrose did drive a navy blue Impala. So maybe Montrose was driving *this* Impala. And maybe it was Montrose was coming here to my place right now to pick me up for our date tonight. I looked at my

watch. Then it told me it was the time that Montrose was going to come here to my place and pick me up at for our date tonight. Then I saw the Impala come to a complete stop here in front of my place. Then I saw who was inside the Impala: Montrose. Then I turned around and went back to the TV, and then I took the remote control off of the coffee table and turned the TV off with the remote control, and then I put the remote control back on the coffee table, and then I collected my purse and turned on the living room light, and then I stepped out of my place and closed the door, and then I took my keys out of my purse and locked the door, and then I put the keys back into my purse and walked over to Montrose's car and got into it, and then Montrose and I put smiled at each other and said hello to each other, and then Montrose and I pulled away from my place so we could leave my place and go keep our date tonight.

Whaley's was a wonderful seafood

restaurant here in Washington. It was on Water Street SE.

Montrose and I were here at Whaley's now. Having Pan Roasted Cod for dinner, and washing it down with a fine white wine.

We were here at the theatre now. Watching a movie called *The Black Widow Hunter. The Black Widow Hunter* was about a private investigator who specialized in finding out if someone were going to marry and kill someone else for his money, and then take his money and run, and stop that person from killing that someone else and stealing his money and running.

We were here at a coffee shop now. Eating chiliburgers and washing them down with coffee; we also talked about the movie. Some of our opinions about the movie were the same, and other opinions we had about the movie were different.

We arrived here at my place now.

"Would you like to come in for a night cap?" I asked Montrose.

Montrose smiled. "Yes," he then said. "That would be nice."

Then we got out of Montrose's car and went into my place.

We were sitting here inside my living room and watching TV and sipping red wine now.

"I'd like to see this nothing box you told me about," I told Montrose. Montrose had told me he had a nothing box and how it operated and that he had had the nothing box custom made for him, and I needed a good reason to get inside his place and search it and bug it and tap the landline phones at his place. And my telling Montrose that I'd like to see his nothing box was the reason I needed to get inside his place and search it and bug it and tap the landline phones at his place. Maybe the answer to what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and the conversation that the President and Bill had had at the country club after Montrose

had left the country club, would be at Montrose's place.

Another reason why I told Montrose I'd like to see his nothing box was because the nothing box amused me.

I held off on telling Montrose that I liked to see his place of work, that he must be very proud of it. I didn't want to that do right now. He might wonder. I didn't want this to happen. And because of this, I didn't want to search his place of work right away. I needed to stick to my cover on this assignment.

"You'd like to see my nothing box?" Montrose asked me and smiled at me.

"Yeah. I think it's amusing."

"You do, huh?"

"Yeah."

"All right. You'll see my nothing box."

I smiled.

Then Montrose and I made another date and decided when on the date I could see his nothing box.

"Well," Montrose then said. "I must be

going. I work tomorrow." Then Montrose finished *his* glass of wine and put the glass on the coffee table, and then he and I got up, and then I walked him to the door.

We were standing here outside my place now.

"Good night, Dahlia," Montrose said to me.

"Good night, Amos," I said to Montrose.

Then Montrose turned around and went to his car to get into it and leave. He was wearing a navy blue suit, a light blue shirt, no tie, open collar, and black leather shoes.

He got into his car and started it up, and then he waved and smiled at me, and I waved and smiled at him. Then he pulled away from his place so he could leave my place. And *I* saw him drive away from my place and turn onto the road and drive down the road. After that, I went back into my house and sat back down on the couch and resumed sipping my wine and resumed watching TV. I would have called Apollo

Bureau CHQ and tell Mrs. Kincaid what Montrose and I had done, but it'd be a waste of time if I would. There wasn't anything to report right now. I hadn't done anything having to do with my assignment. Nothing had happened to make me do something that would have to do with my assignment. I also looked at my watch. Two thirty-nine am.

There wasn't anything else about my assignment I could do right now. So I continued sipping the wine and continued watching TV.

After I finished all of the glass of wine, I turned the TV off with the remote control, and then I took the wine glass into the kitchen and poured hot water into it, and then I left the kitchen and went into my room and turned on the light and got undressed and got into my bathrobe and slippers and removed my make up, and then I put my gun underneath the pillow, and then I turned off the light and got out of my

bathrobe and slippers and got into bed and went to sleep. I hadn't set the alarm clock to get up at a certain time tomorrow, though. I knew I didn't have to set the alarm clock to get up at a certain time tomorrow before I keep my next date with Montrose. Between now and the time I keep my next date with Montrose, there wasn't anything else in my assignment I could do. My next date with Montrose was for tomorrow night.

The next day, I was still here at my place and watching TV and keeping track of time.

It was time now for me to get ready for my date with Montrose. I turned the TV off with the remote control.

About an hour later, Montrose brought his car to a complete stop here in front of my place, and *I* stepped out of my place and closed the door, and then I took my keys out of my purse and locked the door, and then I put my keys back into my purse, and then I walked over to Montrose's car and got into it, and then Montrose and I smiled at each

other and said hello to each other, and then he and I drove away from my place so we could leave my place and go keep our date tonight.

The first place we were going to right now was Montrose's place. We had decided that I would see his nothing box before we do what we had planned for our date tonight.

Montrose's place was just on the edge of downtown Washington. It was big and off white and three stories high and had a matching garage.

Montrose and I came to Montrose's place, and then Montrose brought his car to a complete stop in the driveway in front of his place, and then he and I got out of his car and went into his place. Montrose was wearing a brown suit and a light brown shirt, no tie, open collar, and black leather shoes.

We stepped into the foyer of Montrose's place.

It was big and wide and spacious and

white and had a goldenrod carpet, and in the center of the foyer was a white marble table top on cedar legs.

A man walked out of the hall and into the foyer.

He was tall, stringy, had salt and pepper hair, green eyes, the face of a pelican, and he was wearing a black waist length coat and a matching bow tie and a white shirt and black leather shoes.

Montrose introduced him to me. His name was Monteque; Montrose also told me that Monteque was Montrose's butler.

Monteque and I shook hands. His grip was firm but pleasant.

Montrose told Monteque why I came here with Montrose, and then Montrose and I went to Montrose's study.

Montrose and I came here to Montrose's study and went into it.

Montrose's study was big and wide and spacious and white and had a ginger carpet, and opposite the door to Montrose's study

was Montrose's big white wood desk with a matching armchair in back of his desk, and four matching armchairs in front of his desk, and lining most of the walls here inside Montrose's study were shiny black bookcases built into the wall, and inside the bookcases were books and other things of interest, and there were also pictures and paintings on all of the walls here inside Montrose's study. On one side of the study, next to the door of the study, was a shiny white couch and a cedar coffee table in front of the couch, and to one side of the couch and the coffee table was a small bar with stools in front of the bar.

I looked around the study. This was where I was going to start my search of Montrose's place when I get the chance to search his place and bug his place and tap the landline phones here at his place.

Montrose and I were walking over to Montrose's desk now.

When we reached it, Montrose pointed

to the item on his desk with his finger and smiled at me and said to me: "Well. Here it is: my nothing box."

The nothing box was long, wood blond, rectangular, and on the box was a switch, and next to the switch was a rectangular outline on the top of the box.

Montrose pushed the switch forward, and then the outline of the box opened. Which meant that this outline of the box was the door to the nothing box. And then, a long, light green arm came out of the box slowly and pushed the switch back slowly, and then the arm went back into the box slowly, and then the door of the box closed.

I laughed.

"I take it you like it?" Montrose asked me and smiled.

"Yes, I do," I answered. Then *I* pushed the switch on the nothing box forward, and then I saw the arm come out of the box slowly and push the switch back slowly, and then I saw the arm go back into the box

slowly, and then I saw the portion of the box close. I laughed again. Then Montrose and I left Montrose's study so we could leave his place and keep our date for tonight.

We were walking through Montrose's place now. I looked around and smiled. "Wow," I said. "You've got quite a place here."

"I like it," Montrose said. "I'll have to show it to you some time."

"I'd like that."

"I also have some games here at my place if you'd like to play them some time," Then Montrose told me what games he had here at his place.

"I'd like to play those games very much," I said after Montrose had finished.

Montrose and I were driving away from Montrose's place so we could keep our date now.

Taqueria Habanero was a wonderful Mexican restaurant here in Washington. It was on 14th Street NW.

Montrose and I were here at Taqueria Habanero now. Having Fajita Mixta for dinner, and we washed it down with Margaritas, and for dessert we had Tres leche con helado.

We were here at the wax museum now. Looking at all of the exhibits.

We were here at a coffee shop now. Eating cheeseburgers and washing them down with coffee; we also talked about the exhibits we had seen at the wax museum. We liked them.

We were here at my place now. I had invited Montrose in for a night cap and he had accepted. Now we were sitting in the living room and sipping wine and watching TV and talking.

"I had a wonderful time," I told Montrose.

"So did I," Montrose told me. "You said you'd like to play the games I have at my place, and that you'd like to see my place?"

"Yes, I did."

"Well, you'll be able to do that this weekend. I'm not working this weekend. The office will be closed this weekend. The office is always closed on the weekend."

I smiled. "All right," I said. "I'd like that."

"All right. You could come over to my place this weekend, and then we'll have breakfast, and then we'll play the games and I show you around my place."

"Yeah," I said and smiled.

"All right." Then Montrose told me when this weekend I could go over to his place and have breakfast with him and play the games with him and he shows me around his place. Then he told me how to get to his place, and *I* took my notebook and pen out of my purse and wrote down the directions to his place.

"All right," I then said and smiled after he had finished.

"All right," Montrose then said and smiled. "Well, I gotta get going. I work tomorrow." Then Montrose put finished *his* glass of wine and put the glass on the coffee

table and got up to leave.

I put *my* glass of wine on the coffee table and got up to walk Montrose to the door.

Outside the door, I saw Montrose get into his car and heard him start up his car, and then Montrose smiled and waved at me, and *I* smiled and waved at him. Then I saw Montrose pull away from my place and drive away from my place and turn onto the street and drive down it. After that, I went back into my place.

I was sitting inside the living room and continued sipping my wine and watching TV now. I also looked at my watch. Two ten am.

There wasn't anything else in my assignment I could do until I kept my next date with Montrose. My next date with Montrose was day after tomorrow. What I could do tomorrow was stay in, but I wasn't going to call Apollo Bureau CHQ and tell Mrs. Kincaid about my next date with Montrose. Because there wasn't anything new to report to her. I finished my glass of

wine, and then I turned the TV off with the remote control, and then I took the wine glass with me and left the living room and went into the kitchen and poured hot water into the wine glass, and then I left the kitchen and went into my room and turned on the light and got undressed and got into my bathrobe and slippers and removed my makeup, and then I put my gun underneath the pillow, and then I turned off the light and got out of my bathrobe and slippers and got into bed and went to sleep. I hadn't set the alarm clock to get up at a certain time tomorrow, though. Since there wasn't anything else about my assignment I could do until I keep my next date with Montrose.

The next day, I stayed in and watched TV, but I didn't call Apollo Bureau CHQ and tell Mrs. Kincaid about my new date with Montrose.

The following day was Saturday, and I was here at Montrose's place now. Sitting inside the dining room and having breakfast

with Montrose. For breakfast we had bacon and scrambled eggs and fried potatoes and washed all of this down with coffee and orange juice. Montrose told me he had made the breakfast himself. He liked to cook. And sometimes he did. Other times Monteque did the cooking. Monteque was the only servant who worked here at Montrose's place.

The dining room was big and spacious and white with a blond wood floor, and on either side of the room and against the walls were white cabinets with silverware and plates inside the cabinets, and in the center of the room was the table that Montrose and I were sitting at. It was long and rectangular and caramel colored, and there were matching armchairs surrounding the table.

Montrose and I felt better after we had eaten. Now we were walking through the house. Montrose was giving me the guided tour of his place. Montrose was wearing a long sleeve navy blue shirt and matching

pants and black leather shoes.

The only part of Montrose's place that Montrose didn't show me were the second and third stories of his place. He told me that on those floors were guest rooms. But one of the rooms on the second floor of the place was Montrose's room, and another one of the rooms on the second floor of the place was Monteque's room.

On the first floor of Montrose's place were the rooms that had some of the games inside them.

Behind the house were a swimming pool and a tennis court.

After Montrose showed me around the place, I told him that the first game I'd like to play was a computer game that Montrose had told me about. It was called Helicopter. That was where you learned how to fly a helicopter. And that game was in Montrose's study.

We were in Montrose's study now. Playing that game.

Two hours later, Montrose asked me if I were hungry. I told him I was.

"All right," Montrose said. "I'll make lunch for us."

I smiled. "O.K.," *I* said. "Right now I've got to go to the bathroom. Then I'll rejoin you in the kitchen and watch you make lunch. *I* like to cook, too."

"All right. You know where the bathroom is."

"Yes. I do."

Then Montrose took the game out of the computer and left his study so he could go into the kitchen and make our lunch, and *I* went to the bathroom so I could “go to the bathroom."

I was here inside the bathroom now. The bathroom was small and white, but spacious, and had a medicine cabinet and white toilet and white wash basin and white linoleum floor, and a blue shag mat on the floor, and a white shower curtain on the bathtub. I checked my makeup while I was here and

freshened up, and then I flushed the toilet and left the bathroom.

I reached Montrose's study and looked around to make sure that Montrose or Monteque or anyone else who might be here at Montrose's place right now for some reason won't see me go into Montrose's study and bug Montrose's study and tap his landline phone. I wasn't going to have time to search Montrose's study right now, though. Montrose or Monteque or someone else who'd be here at Montrose's place for some reason could walk into the study right now and see my searching the study as well as bug it and tap the landline phone here. Because of this, I was going to have to search Montrose's study when I could. When Montrose and Monteque and the someone else who could be here at Montrose's place for some reason would be away from the study for a long time for some reason.

No one was around. Then, as quickly as I could, I took my leather gloves out of my

purse and put them on, and then I ran into Montrose's study and took a bug out of my purse and put the bug on the underside of the kneehole of Montrose's desk, and then I took a tap out of my purse and put the tap inside the white landline phone on Montrose's desk. Then, I took my gloves off and put them back into my purse, and then I ran over to the door of Montrose's study and peeked out of it. No one was inside the hall. Then, I walked out of Montrose's study and went to the kitchen so I could rejoin Montrose.

CHAPTER VI

I was here inside the kitchen now. Watching Montrose prepare our lunch.

The kitchen was big and wide and spacious and white and had a white linoleum floor.

Montrose told me what he was making for lunch.

"Mmm," I said.

"Well, I'm glad you like it," Montrose said.

"I do like it. I also like you," Then I embraced and kissed Montrose.

Montrose embraced and kissed me.

We were sitting here inside the dining room and eating lunch now. For lunch we had liver and onions and rice. For dessert we had lemon pudding. And we washed all of this down with a fine red wine.

We felt better after we had eaten. Now I leaned in closer and smiled at him and looked down at his lips. Then we kissed.

"I think we can play the games later," Montrose said.

We were here inside Montrose's room now. Lying on the bed and kissing and our arms entangled in each other.

We were sleeping now.

Montrose's room was small, but spacious, and pale yellow, and had a chocolate brown rug and a caramel colored dresser against one of the walls, and the closet was on another side of the room, and on either side of Montrose's king size bed were shiny caramel colored end tables.

We were sitting here inside the dining room and having dinner now, having another meal that Montrose had made: steak and onion rings. And for dessert we had raspberry ice cream.

We were sitting here inside the living room and watching TV now.

The living room was big and wide and spacious and light brown, and surrounding all of the walls in the room were caramel colored cabinets with phonograph records and audiocassettes and CD's and other things of interest inside the cabinets, and a turn table and a radio and an audiocassette tape recorder and a CD player. And on one side of the room was a big black TV, with a cable box and combination DVD player and VCR, and in the center of the room was a sugar brown sofa that Montrose and I were sitting on.

Montrose and I were here inside Montrose's room now. Inside Montrose's bed and sleeping.

I came awake and looked at Montrose. He was still sleeping. Then, I looked down at the side of the bed *I* was sleeping on. My purse was still inside the bottom shelf of the end table that was on the side of the bed that *I* was sleeping on. As quickly and silently as I could, I pulled my purse out of

the end table and put it on the floor. Then, I looked at Montrose to see if he had heard and had seen what I had done. He didn't. He was still asleep. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I looked through my purse for the knock out drops. I found them. Then, I unscrewed the cap on the bottle of the knock out drops, and then, as quickly and silently as I could, I turned around and put the knock out drops underneath the nostrils of Montrose's nose. Then, Montrose inhaled the knock out drops, and then he passed out. Now Montrose was out cold. And he was going to be out cold for hours. Then, I screwed the cap back onto the bottle of the knock drops and put the knock out drops back into my purse, and then, I got out of bed and collected my purse and went over to the foot of the bed and put on one of the silk bathrobes and one of the pairs of slippers that Montrose had given to me to wear while I was here at Montrose's place, and then I went over to the dresser to put a tap inside

Montrose's cell phone. Montrose's cell phone *was* on the dresser, and I was going to need to tap his cell phone before I search his study. I hadn't been able to tap his cell phone before now.

When I reached the dresser, I took out of my purse my infrared goggles and my leather gloves and put them on, and then I took a tap out of my purse and put the tap inside Montrose's cell phone, and then I took my watch off of the dresser and put it on. I was going to need to keep track of time while I search Montrose's study. I had put the watch on the dresser after Montrose and I had come up here to Montrose's room and before Montrose and I had gone to bed. Now I walked over to the door of Montrose's room and put my infrared goggles on my forehead, and then I peeked out the door to see if the coast were clear or not. It was clear. Then, as quickly and silently as I could, I stepped out of Montrose's room and closed the door. After that, I walked down

the hall and looked for Monteque's room. I was going to have to render Monteque unconscious, too, before I go into Montrose's study and search it.

I came to Monteque's room. Then, I looked all around me to make sure no one was going to see me go into Monteque's room and render him unconscious. Even though Montrose and Monteque were the only two people here at Montrose's place. And even though Montrose was unconscious right now.

No one saw me. No one was inside the hall. Then, I put my infrared goggles back over my eyes, and then I opened the door of Monteque's room just enough to peek into his room. It *was* dark inside Monteque's room, and Monteque was in bed and sleeping. Quickly I took my knock out drops out of my purse and unscrewed the cap on the bottle of the knock out drops, and then, as quickly and silently as I could, I pushed the door back and tip toed into the room

and closed the door.

Monteque's room was just as big as Montrose's room, and it, too, was pale yellow, but the carpet was sugar brown. And on one side of the room was a maple dresser and the closet.

I tip toed over to Monteque's bed, and then, I put the knock out drops underneath the nostrils of Monteque's nose, and then, Monteque inhaled the knock out drops, and then, he passed out. Now he was out cold. And he was going to be out cold for hours. Then I turned around and walked over to the door and put my infrared goggles back on my forehead and opened the door and peeked out the door to see if the coast were clear or not. Even though both Monteque *and* Montrose were out cold right now, and no one else was here at Montrose's place right now. No one was inside the hall. Then, I stepped out of Monteque's room and closed the door and went downstairs to go to Montrose's study and search it.

When I reached Montrose's study, I looked around to make sure no one was going to see me go into Montrose's study and search it. Even though Montrose and Monteque were unconscious right now, *and,* no one else was inside the house right now. No one was around. Then, I put my infrared goggles back over my eyes and went into the study and looked around it. But so far I didn't find anything that could tell me about what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had at the country club after Montrose had left the country club. I even looked inside the safe in the wall and behind one of the pictures on the wall after I had cracked the safe, but I didn't find anything inside the safe that could tell me what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had at the country club after Montrose had left the

country club. I even looked on Montrose's computer to find out if there were anything on his computer that could tell me what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had at the country club after Montrose had left the country club. But I didn't find anything on the computer that could tell me what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation the President and Bill had had at the country club after Montrose had left the country club. I even looked in the drawers of Montrose's desk, but I didn't find anything here that could tell me what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had at the country club after Montrose had left the country club. Now I was running my hands across the insides of the top drawer of Montrose's desk. Then, I felt something. It

was on the underside of the top of Montrose desk. It felt like a button. I pressed it. Then, I heard something and looked to where I heard it. Then, I saw one of the bookcases built into the wall move back and out of the wall and to the side and stop. Then, I walked over to the bookcase that had opened to look inside what was behind the bookcase. Then, I saw a room. I stepped into it and looked all around it. It was small, but spacious, and there were shelves lining all of the walls of the room. On those shelves were some items; I also noticed a switch and a button on the wall next to where the bookcase had been. Then, out of curiosity, I took put my infrared goggles off my forehead and flicked the switch. I wanted to see if the switch would turn on the light. It did. Then I saw light appear inside the room. Then, out of curiosity, I pressed the button. Then, I heard something and looked to where I heard it. Then, I saw the bookcase swing back into the wall. Now the room I

was standing in now was concealed. No one who would be inside the study right now could see what was behind this bookcase. Then, I pushed the button again to see if the bookcase would open. Then I saw the bookcase swing back and out of the wall and to the side and stop. Now I saw the inside of Montrose's study. Then, I pressed the button again. Then, I saw the bookcase swing back into the wall and conceal the room I was in now. Now the room I was in now *was* concealed. And now I could search the room without being seen searching the room. Which was what I wanted. I don't think Montrose or Monteque or someone else who would be here at Montrose's place right now for some reason was going to come into Montrose's study for some reason, but, just in case. Now I looked all around the room. There wasn't anything else inside the room. Only the shelves the items were on and the light switch and the button that opened and closed the bookcase were inside the room. I

looked at the items on the shelves. They were CD's and papers and photographs and a pair of glasses and a large burgundy colored box. Then, I noticed the photographs. I took them off of the shelf and looked at them. Then, I stopped suddenly and looked.

The photographs were of Bill having sex with a young woman. The girl was tall and plump and had long, thick platinum blonde hair and brown eyes and even features. Quickly I took my digital camera out of my purse and photographed all of the photographs of Bill having sex with this girl. Then, I put my camera back into my purse and put all of the photographs back in the order I had found them in, and then I put all of the photographs back on the shelf, and then I looked at the other items on the shelves. Then, I noticed something else. And it had Bill's name on them. They were the papers. I took the papers off of the shelf and looked at them. The papers were statements

of Bill's bank account. They said that several installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account. I wondered about this. Then I took my camera out of my purse and photographed all of these papers, and then I put my camera back into my purse and put all of the papers back into the order I had found them, and then I put all of the papers back on the shelf. Then, I noticed the glasses. I picked them up and put them on. Then, I saw the wall in front of me. I saw through the wall. Inside *that* room was nothing. Not even a door or a window was inside that room. Then, I put my hand in front of me and looked at it. Then, I saw the inside of my hand. Then I looked at the other walls inside the room and saw rooms beyond *these* walls. And they were the same as the first wall I had seen. Then, I looked at the bookcase. Now I looked through it and saw the inside of Montrose's study. Then I took the glasses off and looked at them and

wondered. No doubt these glasses I was looking at were X-ray glasses. And no doubt these glasses belonged to Montrose. But why would Montrose keep X-ray glasses inside a room that was intended to hide things in--a secret room? Why not keep the X-ray glasses inside his safe?...Unless perhaps Montrose knew that if he kept the X-ray glasses inside his safe, and someone cracked the safe to steal what was inside the safe and noticed the X-glasses, and examined the glasses, the someone would take the glasses with him as well as take with him the something else inside the safe he'd want. Or, he could steal the glasses themselves if he knew about them. But whatever the reason was Montrose had for keeping the X-ray glasses inside *this* room, he didn't want anyone to know he had the glasses. He didn't want the glasses to be discovered. I put the glasses back where I had found them, and then I noticed the big burgundy colored box. I picked it up and looked at it and tried to

open it, but I couldn't. Then, I took the X-ray glasses off of the shelf and put them on and looked inside the box. I saw more glasses inside the box. They looked like the X-ray glasses. I thought about this. Maybe *these* glasses were more X-ray glasses. That made sense: having spare X-ray glasses--back up--if this box contained more X-ray glasses. Then, by accident, I pressed one side of the box, and then, the box opened. Then, I put the glasses I had been wearing back on the shelf, and then I took the other pairs of glasses out of the box and them on and ran the same kind of test on them to find out if these glasses were X-ray glasses. They were. Then I put all of *these* pairs of X-ray glasses back into the box and closed the box and put the box back on the shelf. Then, I saw the CD's. I looked at them. There was nothing written on them. I wondered about this. Why were there CD's with nothing written on them here inside this hidden room? I put one of the CD's in my purse. I was going to

have to see what was on the CD. Then I took a bug out of my purse and put it on the underside of one of the shelves, and then I went back to the first pair of X-ray glasses I had discovered and put them on, and then I went over to the bookcase to look through it and see if the coast were clear before I leave the room. Even though Montrose and Monteque were unconscious, and they were going to be out cold for hours, and even though no one else was inside the house. The next thing I was going to do was put the CD that had no writing on the CD that I had put inside my purse inside Montrose's computer so I could see what was on the CD.

When I reached the bookcase, I looked through it. No one was inside the study. Then, I took the X-ray glasses off and put the X-ray glasses back where I had put them, and then I went over to the light switch and the button on the wall and put my infrared goggles back on, and then I turned the light off. Now the room was dark. Then, I pressed

the button that opened and closed the bookcase, and then the bookcase came out of the wall and swung back and to the side and stopped. Then I pressed the button again and walked out of the room, and then the bookcase went back into the wall. Now the bookcase was concealing the hidden room. Then I looked at my watch. One fifty-two. Then I went over to Montrose's computer and sat down behind it and turned it on and put my infrared goggles on my forehead, and then I opened the tray of the computer, and then I took the CD with no writing on it out of my purse and put it into the tray of the computer and closed the tray, and then I saw what was on the computer now. It said that this disk was encrypted. I was going to have to enter the password. I didn't like this. I couldn't duplicate the information on the disc. Because of this, somehow, I was going to have to find out what the password was, then duplicate the information on the disc.

CHAPTER VII

Something just occurred to me. Then I thought about it: what if the password were hidden? And the only way you could find it is with the X-ray glasses? That made sense. If so, then that would mean that Montrose wrote the password down and hid it inside something or behind something that could only be seen by the X-glasses. My guess was that the password was here inside Montrose's study. Somewhere where Montrose could find out what the password was if Montrose couldn't remember the password, somewhere where Montrose could keep the password whenever he was away from his place. Because Montrose didn't want to have the password on him if he were away from his place. It'd be dangerous if he would. Quickly I opened up the drawer the

button was hidden in and pressed it, and then the bookcase swung out of the wall and to the side and stopped. Then I got out of Montrose's chair and ran into the room and put my goggles on, and then I saw the X-ray glasses and put them in my purse, and then I went over to the button on the wall and pressed it, and then I walked out of the room and the bookcase swung back into place, concealing the hidden room, and then I put the goggles on my forehead, and then I put on the X-ray glasses, and then I put my goggles back on, and then I looked around Montrose's study for the password. I also kept track of time. Then, I saw something. It was under the blotter on Montrose's desk. It was the word CONTROLLER. Out of curiosity, I checked to see where the word CONTROLLER was. It was taped to the underside of the top of Montrose's desk and above the top drawer of Montrose's desk. Then I realized that maybe CONTROLLER was the password for the encrypted disc. I

pulled the goggles up and off of my eyes, and then I took the X-ray glasses off and put them down on Montrose's desk, and then I put the goggles back on and typed in the word CONTROLLER--and then it happened--the computer now said I had access to the disc. I looked at what was on the disc. There were files on this disc. But then I realized I wasn't going to have time to read all these files right now. I was going to have to read them later. Because of this, I took my flash drive out of my purse and plugged it into Montrose's computer, and then the flash drive duplicated all of the files on the CD. After I did that, I took my flash drive and the CD out of Montrose's computer and put the flash drive back into my purse, and then I turned off Montrose's computer and collected the CD and the X-ray glasses, and then I opened the drawer the button was in and pressed it, and then the bookcase swung out to the side and back and stopped, and then I ran back into the room and put the

CD and the X-ray glasses back where I had found them, and then I went over to the button on the wall and pressed it, and then I walked out of the room and the bookcase swung back into place. Now the bookcase concealed the hidden room. Then I looked at my watch. Two eleven. Then I left Montrose's study so I could go back Montrose's room and rejoin Montrose. I was going to have to. I wasn't going to have time to duplicate all of the information on all of the other CD's inside the secret room inside Montrose's study right now. Because of this, I was going to have to duplicate all of that information on all of the other CD's inside the secret room inside Montrose's study when I could. And I couldn't leave Montrose's place and go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and show the information on those CD's to Mrs. Kincaid and get the pictures in my camera enhanced and show the pictures to Mrs. Kincaid right now, either. If I would, Montrose would wonder

where I am and what I'm doing. Which I couldn't have him do. So I was going to have to go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and show the information on the CD's to Mrs. Kincaid and get the pictures in my camera enhanced and show the pictures to Mrs. Kincaid when I could.

I was here inside Montrose's room now. In bed and sleeping with Montrose; Montrose was still unconscious.

The next day was Monday, and this morning, I was walking out of Montrose's house to get into my car and get into it and go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and show Mrs. Kincaid the information on the CD I had been able to duplicate the information from and get the pictures in my camera enhanced and show the pictures to Mrs. Kincaid. Yesterday Montrose and I had stayed in at his place and had played games and had watched TV. This morning, Montrose and I had gotten up and had gotten dressed and had had breakfast, and

Montrose had told me he worked today, and I had told him I was going to go back to *my* place and check the mail and the answering machine and change clothes and go into town and do some shopping. Then Montrose and I had made another date. Then Montrose had left his place to go to work. Now *I* reached *my* car and got into it, and then I started it up and drove away from Montrose's place; I also looked out the rear view mirror of my car to see how far away from Montrose's place I was getting. I wanted to call Apollo Bureau CHQ and request a meeting with Mrs. Kincaid so I could go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and keep my meeting with Mrs. Kincaid when I was far away from Montrose's place. I noticed that I *was* far away from Montrose's place. Then, I looked around for a good place to park my car. I found it: the curb in front of someone's place. Then I pulled up to the curb and parked my car here. Then I took my Apollo Bureau cell phone out of my

purse and called Apollo Bureau CHQ.

Then I heard Tina answer *her* purple Apollo Bureau landline phone.

"Hello. Tina?" I said. "It's Dahlia. Please scramble."

Then, I heard Tina press the scrambler button on her landline phone. Then I heard her speak to me again: "Scrambled."

"I need to talk to Mrs. Kincaid. Is she there?"

"She is. I'll connect you to her." Then I heard Tina connect me to Mrs. Kincaid.

"Hello. Dahlia?" Mrs. Kincaid said when she came on.

"Good morning, Mrs. Kincaid," I said to her. Then I told Mrs. Kincaid about the last date I had had with Montrose and how long I had been at his place and what I had done there and what I had discovered there.

"Really," Mrs. Kincaid said after I had finished.

"Yes," I said. "And right now I'd like to request a meeting with you so I can show

you what I found and get the pictures in my camera enhanced and show you the photographs."

"Yes. Well, you can come over here to CHQ right now. When you *do* get here, go to our photographic section and give them your camera so they can enhance the pictures in your camera, then come here to my office and show me what you put inside your flash drive. All right?"

"I'll do that."

"Good," Then Mrs. Kincaid hung up.

So did I. Then I put my Apollo Bureau cell phone back into my purse, and then I started up my car and pulled away from the curb so I could go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and attend the meeting with Mrs. Kincaid.

I was here at Apollo Bureau CHQ now. When I had gotten here, I had gone up to Photographic and had given them my camera so they could enhance the pictures in my camera, and then I had gone up to

Mrs. Kincaid's office. Now I was here inside Mrs. Kincaid's office, and Mrs. Kincaid and I were sitting behind Mrs. Kincaid's desk and looking at what I had put on my flash drive on Mrs. Kincaid's computer.

"So it looks like Montrose is a blackmailer as well as he's a financier," Mrs. Kincaid said after she and I had finished looking at all of the information on the file on the CD I had discovered inside Montrose's secret room inside his study and had had put into my flash drive.

"Yeah," I said. "And it looks like he's blackmailing a lot of people--including Senator Ludlow. It says here that Montrose successfully blackmailed Senator Ludlow into discontinuing his investigation of those businessmen by having Senator Ludlow have sex with this Sheila Cole and being on the take. The number of those installments of the hundred thousand dollars here in the file are the same as the number of installments of the hundred thousand dollars on those

bank account statements of Senator Ludlow's. Which proves that Montrose is making it look like Senator Ludlow is on the take as well as he's making it look like Senator Ludlow had sex with a girl. And Montrose must have introduced those installments of the hundred thousand dollars into Senator Ludlow's bank account to blackmail Senator Ludlow, and he must have had this Sheila Cole have sex with Senator Ludlow so he could blackmail Senator Ludlow, too, and then had pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other taken."

"Yeah. The introduction of those several hundred thousand dollar installments into Senator Ludlow's bank account was an additive measure for blackmailing Senator Ludlow into stopping his investigation of those businessmen. Montrose makes it look like Senator Ludlow is on the take as well as he's having sex with a girl. And then Montrose showed Senator Ludlow the

pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the bank account statements of the hundred thousand dollar installments in Senator Ludlow's bank account and told Senator Ludlow that he was going to show these pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the bank account statements of the hundred thousand dollars to the authorities if Senator Ludlow continues his investigation of the businessmen to find out if the businessmen are conducting criminal investigations."

"Yeah. And then Senator Ludlow stopped investigating the businessmen, and then Montrose told the businessmen he stopped investigating them."

"Yeah."

Mrs. Kincaid and I were looking at the photographs of the photographs of Bill and this girl having sex with each other, and the photographs of the statements of Bill's bank account saying that several installments of a

hundred thousand dollars were introduced into Bill's bank account now. I saw Mrs. Kincaid shake her head when she looked at all of the photographs and spoke to her: "You're not alone, Mrs. Kincaid. I don't like what I see, either."

"Well, the information we have right now confirms the fact that these businessmen *are* conducting criminal operations."

"Yeah. But we don't know what criminal operations they're conducting."

"No. We don't. But we should find out what these criminal operations are that they're conducting. Especially now since Senator Ludlow isn't investigating those businessmen to find out if they *are* conducting criminal operations, anymore. We can do that while you try to get the information on the rest of those CD's you found inside that secret room inside Montrose's study and bring the information back here for us to look at."

"I'll see what I can do," Then I told Mrs.

Kincaid I had another date with Montrose. Then I told her where and when Montrose and I were going to have that date.

Mrs. Kincaid nodded. "And we should find out who this girl is that had sex with Senator Ludlow, too. Maybe that'll help." Then Mrs. Kincaid sent the photograph of Bill and the girl having sex with each other to the intelligence department of the Apollo Bureau, and then she got on *her* purple landline phone and called Wayne Sorensen, the head of Intelligence for the Apollo Bureau, and told him to find out who the girl was that had had sex with Bill. After that, they hung up. Then Mrs. Kincaid and I continued looking at the information I had put on my flash drive.

A few minutes later, Mrs. Kincaid's purple landline phone rang. She picked up the receiver and said, "Yes?...Yes, Wayne?...I see...Thank you, Wayne." Then Mrs. Kincaid hung up and spoke to me: "That was Intelligence. They found out who the girl is

that had sex with Senator Ludlow. Her name *is* Sheila Cole. She was in prison. For prostitution and adultery. Now she works for Montrose. In the accounting department of Montrose's financial company."

"Well, that's really discrediting: the girl Senator Ludlow had sex with is an ex-criminal."

"Yeah. Making it worse for Senator Ludlow instead of better. I'll have Surveillance put on *her* under twenty four hour surveillance. I will want to know what she's doing and where she goes."

"Of course. Anything else, Mrs. Kincaid?"

"No. That's it."

"All right. Bye."

"Bye."

Then I collected my purse and left Mrs. Kincaid's office so I could go try to get that information on the rest of the CD's I had discovered inside the secret room inside Montrose's study, and to keep my date with Montrose, while Mrs. Kincaid tries to find

out what those criminal operations are that the businessmen were conducting.

I was here at my place now. After I had gotten here, I had checked the mail. I didn't get any. Then I had checked my answering machine to see if I got any messages. I didn't. Then I had gone into my room and had gotten undressed and had gotten into my bathrobe and slippers and had removed my make up, and then I set the alarm clock for a time I wanted to get up at later today, and then I had put my gun underneath the pillow and had removed my bathrobe and slippers and had gotten into bed. Now I was sleeping. I was going to need to get some sleep for the new date I was going to have with Montrose. That date was for tonight.

The alarm clock buzzed. I stirred, then came awake and turned the alarm clock off. Then I looked at the time. The clock told me it was the time I wanted to get up at. Then I got out of bed so I could get ready for my date with Montrose.

About an hour later, Montrose brought his car to a complete stop here in front of my place, and *I* stepped out of my place and closed the door, and then I took my keys out of my purse and locked the door, and then I put my keys back into my purse, and then I ran over to Montrose's car and got into it, and then Montrose and I kissed, and then Montrose and I pulled away from my place so we could leave my place and go keep our date tonight.

Le Diplomate was a nice French restaurant here in Washington. It was on 14th Street.

Montrose and I were here at Le Diplomate now. Having beef bourguignon for dinner, and washing it down a fine red wine, and for dessert we had pastry in a basket.

We were here at the theatre now. Watching a movie called Chamelius. Chamelius was about a man who can assume any form and blend in with the

environment.

We were here at a coffee shop now. Having hamburgers and washing them down with Coke.

We were out here in the parking lot of the coffee shop now. We had finished eating. Now we were going to Montrose's car so we can get into Montrose's car and then Montrose was going to drive me home. He told me he was working tomorrow. He was wearing a black suit and a grayish shirt, no tie, open collar, and black leather shoes.

We reached Montrose's car and got into it.

"You know what I'd like to do?" I told Montrose.

"No," Montrose said. "What would you like to do?"

"Make breakfast for you. You made meals for me. And I like them. Very much. Now I'd like to make meals for you. *I* like to cook, too."

Montrose smiled. "Yes," he then said.

"You told me that."

"Yes, I know. So what we could do is this: you go home and go to bed after you drop me off at my place. You did say you have to work tomorrow, and because of that, I don't want to keep you up. And then I'll go over to your place tomorrow morning and make us breakfast while you're shaving and getting dressed. And then, we'll have breakfast. What time do you usually get up to get ready to go to work?"

Montrose told me.

"I see," I said. "O.K. I'll be there."

Montrose smiled. "All right," he then said. Then he started up his car, and then he and I left the restaurant. I needed to have my car close by if or when I need to use it. That was why I had suggested to Montrose that I go over to his place and make breakfast for him and me instead of his taking me back to *his* place, and then tomorrow morning I make breakfast for us.

The next day, I was here at Montrose's

place. Inside the kitchen and making breakfast for Montrose and me while Montrose was shaving and getting dressed.

Montrose and I were in the dining room and eating the breakfast now. The breakfast were bacon and cheese and jalapeno omelets. And we washed them down with coffee and orange juice.

We felt better after we had eaten. Now we were having more coffee.

"If it's all right with you," I then said to Montrose. "I'd like to stay here at your place and play more of those games."

"Today?"

"Yeah."

"All right. If you need anything, let Monteque know."

"I'll do that."

"Good," Then Montrose looked at his watch. Then he spoke to me again: "Well. I must be going. I did say I work today."

"Yes, you did."

Then Montrose and I got up from the

table and went outside the house.

When we reached his car, we embraced and kissed.

"See you tonight," Montrose said. Montrose and I had made another date. We were going to stay in here at Montrose's place tonight.

"I'm looking forward to it," I said.

"So am I," Then Montrose got into his car and started it up, and then he waved at me and smiled at me, and I waved and smiled at him. Then Montrose pulled away from his place so he could go to work, and *I* went back into his place. Casually I looked around to see if Monteque were around. But so far, I didn't see him. I *was* going to see if he *were* around. Because I was going to have to make sure he doesn't see me get the information on the rest of those CD's I had seen inside Montrose's secret room inside Montrose's study. Montrose and I hadn't told Monteque that I wanted to stay here at Montrose's place and play more of the games here at

Montrose's place while Montrose was at work. Because of this, I was going to have to tell Monteque that Montrose had given me permission to stay here at Montrose's place and play the games while Montrose was at work.

I was here inside Montrose's study now. I had gone into Montrose's room and had gotten my purse without Monteque's seeing me do it, and then I had gone here inside Montrose's study without Monteque's seeing me do it, too. Now I got behind Montrose's desk and opened the drawer the button that opened and closed the bookcase was in and pressed the button, and then the bookcase opened, and then I ran into the room and collected all of the CD's here and put them in my purse, and then I pressed the button inside the room and walked out of the room and saw the bookcase slide back into place, and now the bookcase concealed the secret room here inside Montrose's place, and then I ran back to Montrose's desk and closed the

drawer the button that opened and closed the bookcase was in, and then I sat down behind Montrose's desk and turned on the computer and watched the entrance to the study to see or hear Monteque coming.

My hand was going to my purse so I could put my hand into the purse and take out of the purse my flash drive and connect the flash drive to Montrose's computer and duplicate the information on the CD's when I heard something. I looked to where I heard it. Then, I became surprised, although I didn't look or sound surprised. I couldn't. My looking or sounding surprised would arouse curiosity.

CHAPTER VIII

Monteque had appeared and stood at the entrance to Montrose's study and looked inside the study and saw me sitting at Montrose's computer. And he looked like he was wondering what I was doing. Then he spoke to me: "Ms Halver. Can I help you?"

"Mr. Montrose said I can play some games while he's at work," I told Monteque. "You can check with him if you like."

"Mr. Montrose said you can play some games while he's at work?" Monteque asked me.

"That's right."

Then Monteque walked into Montrose's study and picked up the receiver of the landline phone on Montrose's desk and called Montrose and told him what I had told Monteque.

"That's right, Monteque," Montrose confirmed after Monteque had finished. "I told Ms Halver she can play the games while I'm at work."

"I see. Very good, sir."

"Anything else, Monteque?"

"No. That's it."

"All right. Bye." Then Montrose hung up.

So did Monteque. Then Monteque spoke to me again: "Would like to have something to drink while you're playing the games, Ms Halver?"

I smiled. "All right. What do you have?"

Then Monteque told me, and then I told him I'll have the Coke. Then Monteque disappeared. I didn't want to drink something alcoholic while I duplicate the information on the CD's. Instead, I wanted to drink something non-alcoholic while I duplicate the information on the CD's. Because I was going to need to be sober while I duplicate the information on the CD's.

To make it look real, I put one of the video games inside the tray and pressed the button, and then the game went into the computer, and then I started playing the game. I was going to need to have Monteque see me play a game on the computer when he comes back here to the study and gives me the Coke. I didn't want Monteque to see me duplicating the information of the CD's. Instead, I was going to duplicate the information on the CD's after Monteque comes here to the study and gives me the Coke and after he leaves.

Monteque came back with a bottle of Coke and a glass on a tray and poured some Coke into the glass, and then Monteque put the glass of Coke and the bottle of Coke on Montrose's desk.

"Thank you, Monteque," I said to Monteque and sipped the Coke.

"You're welcome, Ms Halver," Monteque said. "Will there be anything else?"

"No. But if something else comes up

later, I'll tell you."

"Very good, ma'am. I'll close the door on my way out." Then Monteque collected the tray the bottle of Coke and the glass had been on and left the study and closed the door on his way out. Then I took the game out of the computer and put it in its case and put the case on Montrose's desk, and then I took my flash drive out of my purse and connected the flash drive to the computer, and then I took all of the CD's out of my purse and put them into the computer one at a time and duplicated all of the information on the CD's and sipped the Coke.

I was walking away from Montrose's room now. I had finished duplicating all of the information on those CD's and had disconnected my flash drive and had put my flash drive into my purse, and then I had turned off the computer and had put all of the CD's back inside the secret room, and then I had left Montrose's study and had

gone back to Montrose's room and had put on my makeup and had gotten out of the bathrobe and slippers that Montrose had let me use while I'm here at Montrose's place and had gotten into my street clothes and had collected my purse and had left Montrose's room. Now I was walking through Montrose's place so I could leave Montrose's place and go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and give Mrs. Kincaid the information on the CD's.

I was walking into the foyer of Montrose's place now. Then, I saw Monteque. He was here inside the foyer, too. Checking the mail. I became surprised when I saw him. Although I didn't look or sound surprised when I saw him. I couldn't. My looking or sounding surprised when I saw him would make him curious.

Monteque saw me, and then he spoke to me: "Leaving, Ms Halver?"

"Yes, I am," I told Monteque. "I need to go back to my place and check the mail and

my answering machine and change clothes. But I'm coming back. Mr. Montrose and I have a date tonight. We're going to stay in here at *his* place tonight."

"I see. Did you have fun playing those games?"

"Yes, I did. I'm looking forward to playing them again."

"I see. Well, I'm glad you like them."

"Have *you* played them, Monteque?"

"Yes, I have. I find them fascinating."

"So do I. Well, I must be going. I did say I need to go back to my place and check the mail and my answering machine and change clothes."

"Yes, you did. I won't keep you."

"Thank you, Monteque."

"You're welcome, Ms Halver."

Then I walked out of the foyer and walked out of the house and walked over to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up and pulled away from Montrose's place.

I was driving away from Montrose's place now; I also looked into the rear view mirror of my car to see how far away from Montrose's place I was getting. I wanted to make sure I was far away from Montrose's place before I get out my cell phone and call Apollo Bureau CHQ and request a meeting with Mrs. Kincaid. When I noticed I *was* far away from Montrose's place, I looked around for a good place to park at and call Apollo Bureau CHQ and request a meeting with Mrs. Kincaid. I found it: the parking lot of a shopping center. I pulled into the shopping center and parked my car here inside the parking lot, and then I took my Apollo Bureau cell phone out of my purse and called Apollo Bureau CHQ.

Tina answered the phone.

"Hello. Tina?" I said to her. "It's Dahlia. Please scramble."

Then I heard Tina push the scrambler button on her phone, and then she spoke to me again: "Scrambled."

"I need to talk to Mrs. Kincaid, Tina. Is she there?"

"Yes, she is. I'll connect you to her."

Then I heard Tina connect me to Mrs. Kincaid.

"Hello. Dahlia?" Mrs. Kincaid said when she came on.

"Yes," I said. "I have the information on the rest of those CD's. I'd like to take it over to CHQ and have you see it."

"You can do that right now."

"I'm on my way," Then I hung up and put my Apollo Bureau cell phone back into my purse, and then I started up my car and pulled out of the parking lot of the shopping center so I could go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and keep my appointment with Mrs. Kincaid.

I was here at Apollo Bureau CHQ now. Inside Mrs. Kincaid's office. Mrs. Kincaid and I were sitting behind Mrs. Kincaid's desk and looking at all of the information on those CD's on Mrs. Kincaid's computer.

"Boy, he has been blackmailing a lot of people," Mrs. Kincaid said when she saw the information.

"Yeah," I said.

"And this information we're looking at, and the other information we saw, confirms the fact that these businessmen *are* conducting criminal operations."

"Yeah."

"We're trying to find out what those criminal operations are that these businessmen are conducting, but so far, we haven't found anything. But we're still looking."

"Good. What about Sheila Cole? Have you found out what *she's* doing now?"

"No, we haven't. No one has seen or heard from her. We also found out where she lives and checked her place. She's not there. We found out what kind of car she drives and checked that. Nothing there. And she hasn't been working, either."

I wondered about this. "Where's her car

now?"

"At her place. In her garage."

I nodded.

"We're still trying to find her," Mrs. Kincaid continued. "And we're putting her place and her car and Montrose's financial company under twenty four hour surveillance if she goes back home or if she goes back to her car and or if she goes back to work, too."

"Good."

"Once we find out what these criminal operations are that these businessmen are conducting, and remove all of those CD's that are inside the secret room of Montrose's study, and remove all of the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other that are inside the secret room of Montrose's study, and remove all of the statements of Senator Ludlow's bank account saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars have been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank that

are inside the secret room of Montrose's study, and backup Montrose's computer, and stop Montrose himself, we can tell the President we did these things, and then the President can tell Senator Ludlow we did these things, and then Senator Ludlow can arrest those businessmen."

"Yeah."

"But until we find out what these criminal operations are that these businessmen are conducting, you'll have to hold off on removing all of those CD's from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and hold off on removing all of those photographs of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and hold off on removing all of those bank statements of Senator Ludlow's that say those installments of a hundred thousand dollars have been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and hold off on

locking down Montrose's computer, and hold off on stopping Montrose himself, and we hold off on telling the President what we're going to do. If we *do* tell the President what we're going to do, and then the President tells Senator Ludlow what we're doing to do, Senator Ludlow will behave differently. And his behaving differently would tip off Montrose and the businessmen."

"I understand."

"You keep an eye on Montrose until we tell you what we find out about the criminal operations. We will need to keep tabs on Montrose's movements as well as we need to keep tabs on the businessmen's movements until we take action against Montrose and the businessmen."

"I understand. I'll do that. Anything else, Mrs. Kincaid?"

"No, that's it. Bye, Dahlia."

"Bye, Mrs. Kincaid," Then I collected my purse and left Mrs. Kincaid's office so I could

go keep an eye on Montrose.

CHAPTER IX

I was here at Montrose's place now. I had come back here to Montrose's place and had stayed here at his place and had kept an eye on him, and he and I had done the same things we had done before, too. And this morning, he and I had had breakfast, and then he had gone to work, and I had gone back to his room so I could continue sleeping. I was still sleepy. Now I was here inside Montrose's room and in bed and sleeping.

My cell phone rang. I came awake and sat up and took my purse off of the bottom shelf of the end table on the side of the bed I was on and took my cell phone out of my purse and said hello.

"Hello. Dahlia? It's Mrs. Kincaid. Please scramble."

I pressed the scrambler button on my cell phone and spoke to Mrs. Kincaid again: "Scrambled."

"We found out what those criminal operations are that the businessmen are conducting," Mrs. Kincaid told me. "Prostitution, bootlegging, piracy, bribery, protection, murder, framing people for crimes they didn't commit. The list is endless."

"My god!" I exclaimed. "What about blackmail? Do they commit that crime, too?"

"No, they don't. Only Montrose conducts blackmail operations. We found out that Montrose works with the businessmen."

"I see."

"Yeah. Well, now that we know what those criminal operations are that the businessmen are conducting, you can remove all of those CD's from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and remove all of those pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other from

the secret room inside Montrose's study, and remove all of those papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars were introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and backup Montrose's computer and, stop Montrose himself."

"Yeah."

"And after you do all of that, we can tell the President what we've done and turn over to him all of the information on those criminal operations, and then he can tell Senator Ludlow what we've done and why we did it and give Senator Ludlow that information, and then the FBI can arrest those businessmen."

"Well, it so happens that I can and will get started on removing all of those CD's from Montrose's secret room, and remove all of the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other from Montrose's secret room, and remove all of those papers that say several installments of

a hundred thousand dollars were introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account from Montrose's secret room, and backup Montrose's computer, and stop Montrose tonight when Montrose comes home from work. I'm here at Montrose's place right now, and Montrose is at work right now. Once I've done all of these things, I'll tell you."

"Good."

"Anything else, Mrs. Kincaid?"

"No, that's it. Good luck, Dahlia."

"Thank you, Mrs. Kincaid."

"You're welcome, Dahlia."

"Bye."

"Bye." Then Mrs. Kincaid hung up.

So did I. Then I put my cell phone back into my purse. After that I got off the bed and went over to the dresser and took my watch off the dresser and looked at it. Nine fifty-seven.

Montrose and I were going to be staying in here at his place again tonight. So I

thought about how I could do all of these things tonight and what equipment I'd need to use to do all of these things tonight. I put on my makeup and removed the bathrobe and slippers and got into my street clothes and collected my purse and left Montrose's room so I could leave Montrose's place and go back to my place and get the equipment I was going to need to remove all of the CD's from Montrose's secret room, and remove all of the pictures of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other from Montrose's secret room, and remove all of the papers that said several installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account from Montrose's secret room, and backup Montrose's computer, and stop Montrose himself.

I was walking through the hall now. Then, I saw Monteque. *He* was walking through the hall, too. I became surprised when I saw him, although I didn't look or sound surprised when I saw him. I couldn't.

My looking or sounding surprised when I saw him would make him curious.

Monteque stopped when he saw me and spoke to me: "Leaving, Ms Halver?"

I stopped and spoke to Monteque: "Yes, I am. Just need to go back to my place and check the mail and my answering machine and change clothes. But I'll be coming back. Mr. Montrose and I will be spending another night here at his place."

"Oh, I see. Well. I don't mean to keep you. Bye, Ms Halver."

"Bye, Monteque."

Then Monteque continued walking down the hall, going in the opposite direction *I* was going in, and *I* continued walking down the hall so I could leave Montrose's place and go back to *my* place and see what equipment I'd need for the work that I could do tonight and get it; I also thought about seeing Monteque. This had been the second time I had seen him when I was leaving Montrose's place so I could go do something

in my assignment and had told him I had to go back to my place and check the mail and my answering machine and change clothes, but I was going to come back here to Montrose's place and keep my date with Montrose here at his place. Maybe it was coincidence. Or maybe it was something else. But whatever it was, I was going to have to be prepared for Monteque before, during, and after the work that I would be able to do tonight. If necessary, I might have to stop him as well as remove all of the CD's from Montrose's secret room, and remove all of the pictures of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other from Montrose's secret room, and remove all of the papers that said several installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account from Montrose's secret room, and backup Montrose's computer, and stop Montrose himself.

I reached the front door of Montrose's place, and then I walked out of it and over to

my car and unlocked it, and then I got into my car and started it up, and then I pulled away from Montrose's place.

CHAPTER X

"That has to be it!"

The words pounded in my brain as I drove over to my place. Sheila Cole had been killed. And the person who had killed her had put her body somewhere where it'll never be found, or it won't be found right away. And the reason why that person had killed Sheila was to keep Sheila from telling anyone that person had gotten Sheila to have sex with Bill so the person will discredit Bill. And the person who had killed Sheila to keep Sheila from telling anyone he had gotten Sheila to have sex with Bill so the person will discredit Bill had to be Montrose. This would explain why no one had seen or heard from Sheila, and why Sheila hadn't gone back to her place, and why Sheila hadn't gone back to her car, and why Sheila

hadn't gone back to work.

I looked into the rear view mirror of my car to see if I were far away from Montrose's place. I was. I couldn't see Montrose's place. Then, I looked around for a good place to park at and call Apollo Bureau CHQ and tell Mrs. Kincaid my theory about Sheila's death. I found it: someone's home. Then I pulled off of the road and up to the curb and parked my car here in front of that person's home. Then I took my cell phone out of my purse and called Apollo Bureau CHQ and told Mrs. Kincaid my theory about Sheila's death.

"I see," Mrs. Kincaid said after I had finished. "Well, it *does* make sense. Well, we'll still look for her and still keep her place and her car and Montrose's financial company under twenty four hour surveillance."

"Of course."

"Anything else, Dahlia?"

"No, that's it. Bye, Mrs. Kincaid."

"Bye, Dahlia," Then Mrs. Kincaid hung

up.

So did I. Then I put my cell phone back into my purse and started up my car and pulled away from the curb so I could go back to my place.

I was here at my place now. Inside my Apollo Bureau room. Deciding what equipment I could use for the work that I would be able to do tonight.

After I decided what equipment I could use for the work that I would be able to do tonight, I collected it and left my Apollo Bureau room.

I was here inside the living room now. I checked the mail and the answering machine. But I didn't get any mail, and I didn't get any messages. Then I went back into *my* room and changed clothes. Then I left my room so I could leave my place and go back over to Montrose's place.

I was here at Montrose's place now. When I gotten here, I had gone into Montrose's room and had gotten undressed

and had gotten into the bathrobe and slippers that Montrose let me use while I'm here at Montrose's place, and then I had left Montrose's room and had gone into Montrose's study. Now I was sitting behind Montrose's desk and playing a computer game to pass the time.

I was still here at Montrose's place. It was five eighteen now. I had kept busy playing more games and watching TV and keeping track of time until it was time for Montrose to go home from work. Now I was here inside the kitchen and making dinner for Montrose and me. *I* wanted to cook this time. And I was glad that I *was* cooking this time. This might be the last home cooked meal that Montrose has before he's out of business.

Montrose came into the kitchen. He was wearing a black suit and a light blue shirt and a black and light blue stripe tie and black leather shoes.

I smiled at him when I saw him. "Hello,"

I said to him.

He smiled at me and spoke to me: "Hello. Monteque told me *you're* making dinner tonight."

"Yes. I want to."

Then Montrose walked over to me and looked at what I was preparing for dinner.

"Mmm," he said. "It looks good."

Then Montrose and I kissed.

Montrose and I were here in the dining room now. Montrose had gotten undressed and had taken a shower and had changed clothes while I had continued cooking tonight's dinner. Now Montrose and I were sitting at the table and eating the dinner; spaghetti and meatballs in marinara sauce, and for dessert we had spumoni ice cream, and we washed the spaghetti and the ice cream down with red wine. I had stopped off at the store and had bought the spumoni ice cream after I had gone back to my place and had decided what equipment I could use in the work I would be able to do tonight and

had collected it, and after I had checked the mail and my answering machine, and after I had changed clothes, and after I had left my place, and before I had returned here to Montrose place.

We felt good after we had eaten. Now we were having more wine.

We were here inside Montrose's study now. Playing the same computer game we had played before: the one about flying a helicopter. Then I told Montrose I had to go to the bathroom, and then I collected my purse and left Montrose's study. Montrose continued playing the computer game.

A few minutes later, Montrose stopped suddenly and looked surprised.

I was standing in front of his desk and holding my gun on him. My silencer was on the gun; I was also wearing my gloves and my street clothes.

"What is this?" Montrose wondered.

"I'm going to stop you and backup your computer and remove all of the CD's you

have in your secret room, and remove all of the pictures you have of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other, and remove all of the papers that say several installments of a hundred thousand dollars have been introduced in Senator Ludlow's bank account." I told him.

Montrose really looked surprised now.

Then I told him what I had been looking into and why I had been looking into it and what I had discovered.

Montrose really looked surprised after I had finished.

"And you must have killed Sheila Cole after you had her have sex with Senator Ludlow so you could discredit Senator Ludlow so you won't have her tell anyone you had her have sex with Senator Ludlow so you could discredit Senator Ludlow," I continued. Then I told Montrose I had figured it out.

"You're right," Montrose admitted after I had finished. "Sheila is dead for that reason.

But I didn't kill her. Instead, someone else did and disposed of her body."

"Where's her body now?"

"I don't know. I'm not supposed to know. It's better that way."

"I imagine it is. Who disposed of Sheila Cole's body and how did he dispose of Sheila Cole's body?"

"I don't know that, either."

"I know. It's better not knowing that."

"That's right. You're a spy, aren't you. Who do you do your spying for?"

"That's not important. Besides. Your knowing who I do my spying for won't do *you* any good."

"Perhaps not. But even if you do what you say you're going to do, you're going to have to get passed Monteque. One of his duties is patrolling the house."

Now I knew why I had seen Monteque those last two times I had seen him in the house when I had left Montrose's place and had gone and done those things in my

assignment that I had to do. His seeing at me at those times must not have been coincidental; then, something else just occurred to me: if one of Monteque's duties were to patrol Montrose's place, then he must be working with Montrose and the businessmen on what they were doing. He must be in on what Montrose and the businessmen were doing. "I'll take my chances," I then told Montrose. Then suddenly Montrose pulled out a gun, and I shot him in the head. Then Montrose fell back against his chair and died. His head rested on the top of the chair, and his eyes looked up at the ceiling. I got behind his desk and closed his eyes. Then, I put my gun into my purse, and then I took the computer game out of the tray of the computer and put the game in its case and put the computer game on the desk, and then I took a flash drive of mine out of my purse and connected it to the computer--then it happened: the computer exploded.

From the inside. Although there wasn't a loud sound coming from the explosion. Instead, the sound of the explosion was silent. Then I saw flames and smoke leak out of the computer. Then there was more exploding. Then, the exploding stopped. Now the computer was destroyed. Completely inoperable. The computer was now rubble. I could only guess that Monteque was on to me and had set this up. Although we wanted the original computer for legal evidence, at least we had the data backed up. Then, I disconnected the flash drive from the computer and put the flash drive back into my purse, and then I went over to the drawer of Montrose's desk that had in it the button that opened and closed the bookcase concealing the secret room, and then I opened the drawer and pressed the button, and then the bookcase swung open and back and stopped, and then I ran into the secret room and zipped open some compartments inside my purse, and then I

put all of the CD's, and all of the pictures of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other, and all of the papers that said several installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account, into the compartments of my purse, and then I collected my purse and pressed the button on the wall, and then I stepped out of the room, and then the bookcase swung back into place, and now the bookcase concealed the secret room. And then I ran over to the door of Montrose's study to unlock it and peek out of it. I had locked the door after I had come into Montrose's room and before I had stopped Montrose and had locked down his computer and had removed all of the CD's and pictures of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying several installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account from Montrose's secret room. I had wanted to. To slow down or stop Monteque

or someone else or the both of them from stopping me from stopping Montrose and locking down his computer and removing all of the CD's and all of the photographs of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and all of the papers saying that several installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced in Bill's bank account from Montrose's secret room.

When I reached the door, I unlocked it as quickly and silently as I could, and then, I peeked out the door. I didn't see anyone inside the hall; not even Monteque. Then, I realized that just because I didn't see Monteque or someone else or the both of them now didn't mean that I wouldn't see Monteque or someone else or the both of them later. It just didn't work that way. Whether I liked it or not, I was going to have to watch out for Monteque or someone else or the both of them and deal with Monteque or someone else or the both of them later if I have to before I escape.

CHAPTER XI

As quickly and silently as I could, I took my gun out of my purse and pressed the button on the knob of the door of Montrose's study to lock the door and stepped out of Montrose's study and closed the door, and then I twisted the knob of the door of Montrose's study as quickly and silently as I could to see if the door were locked. It was. Now the door to Montrose's study being locked would keep Monteque or someone else or the both of them from getting inside Montrose's study and seeing what I had done inside Montrose's study right away, or the door to Montrose's study being locked would keep Monteque or someone else or the both of them from getting inside Montrose's study and seeing what I had done inside Montrose's study--

period. He or they would think that Montrose didn't want to be disturbed, or he or they would think that Montrose had stepped out of his study and had locked it and had left his study for some reason. Then I turned around and looked all around me as I walked through the hall to go to the front of the house, ready to shoot if I have to, and knowing that Monteque or someone else or the both of them could enter the hall from one end of the hall or the other, or Monteque or someone else or the both of them could walk out of one of the rooms here inside the hall and step into the hall and walk the through the hall--if Monteque or someone else or the both of them were here on this floor of the house right now. Then, I stopped suddenly and looked. Then, I became surprised. But this time I looked surprised. Because I knew that this time it was all right for me to look or sound surprised.

Monteque walked out of the foyer and

into the hall. He saw what I was doing. Then, I brought my gun down to shoot him, but before I *could* shoot him, he rushed into another room and closed the door. Then, I heard Monteque lock the door. Then, I rushed over to the door to hear what Monteque was doing inside the room. Then, I put my ear to the door. Then, I heard him talking. "Hello," he said. "Mr. Montrose? ...Hello. Mr. Montrose? Hello...Mr. Montrose...Mr. Montrose." Then, I didn't hear Monteque talking. Then, I heard him talk again. He said: "Hello. Mr. Whitcom? ...This is Monteque. We've got a problem. There's this girl here at Mr. Montrose's place. She's a guest of Mr. Montrose's. But I just saw her inside the hall with a pistol in her hand. And there's a silencer on the gun. She just tried to kill me. And I just tried to get a hold of Mr. Montrose to tell him what I saw the girl do. But he didn't respond...I'm inside another room right now...Yes, I do....Yes, sir...Bye, Mr. Whitcom." Then,

Monteque stopped talking. Then, I wondered what Monteque and this Whitcom had talked about that had to do with Montrose and me, and they must have been talking to each other on the phone. Either they had talked to each other on their cell phones, or the both of them were talking on their landline phones, or one of them was talking on his landline phone while the other one was talking on his cell phone. But whatever it was that they had talked about that had to do with Montrose and me, it sounded like this Whitcom wanted to help Monteque stop me from killing Monteque. If so, then that would mean that this Whitcom was going to come over here to Montrose's place and help Monteque keep me from killing Monteque. I watched the front door of Montrose's place and continued listening in on the room Monteque was in.

A few minutes later, I heard something. I looked to where I heard it. It sounded like a car pulling up to the house and come to a

complete stop in front of the house. That had to be this Whitcom. Then, I looked at the room Monteque was in, and then, I looked to where I heard the sound. Then, I looked around all around me. Then, I saw some other rooms here inside the hall. I ran over to one of them and opened the door and looked inside the room. It was unoccupied. Then I went into the room and closed the door. Then, I opened the door just enough to peek out of it and peeked out the door. Then, I saw a man come into the hall. He was tall, emaciated, pale, had red hair, dark blue eyes, a bland face, and he was wearing a black coat and a white shirt, no tie, open collar, light orange pants, white tennis shoes, and in his hand was a pistol with a silencer on the gun. This man had to be this Whitcom. But I was going to need to find out if this man *were* Whitcom or not. Quickly I stepped out of the room and into the hall and pointed my gun at this man. Then, I yelled out to him: "Whitcom." Then,

the man stopped and looked to where he heard me yell out to him. Then, he saw me. Then, I told him I had overheard the conversation that he and Monteque had had about Montrose and me.

"And you must be the girl who tried to kill Monteque," he said after I had finished.

"That's right," I admitted. "And now I have to kill you." And then I shot him. Twice in the heart.

Then, the man shriveled up like a dried prune and fell down to the floor. Then, I saw Monteque open the door of the room he was in and stick his head out the door. No doubt he wanted to see what was going on. He must have heard what was going on inside the hall; I also saw the pistol in his hand. There was a silencer on the gun. Then he saw the man on the floor, and then he saw me standing inside the hall--and then he shot at me--and then--quickly--I went back into the room I had been in and closed the door--and then--quickly--Monteque went

back into the room *he* had been in and closed the door. Then, I heard Monteque lock the door of the room he was in. I peeked out of the door of the room I was in to see what was going on. Nothing was going on. Then I ran out of the room and over to the man on the floor and kicked the gun out of his hand and stuck the barrel of *my* gun in his head and checked his vitals to see if he were dead. He was. Then, I heard something. I looked to where I heard it. It sounded like it was coming from inside the room Monteque was in. I stood up and went over to the door of the room Monteque was in and put my ear to the door to hear what was going on inside the room Monteque was in. I didn't hear anything going on inside the room. Then, out of curiosity, I shoved my foot into the door of the room a couple of times, and then I moved away from the door and watched the door. I wanted to see if Monteque were going to shoot at the door, thinking I was out in the hall and in front of

the door. He didn't shoot at the door. Then, as hard as I could, I shoved my foot into the door again, and then the door kicked back, and then I looked inside the room, ready to shoot if I have to. Then, I saw the window on the other side of the room. It was open. I didn't see anything else inside the room, and I didn't see Monteque or anyone else or the both of them inside the room, either. Then, cautiously, I entered the room and looked all around me, ready to shoot if I have to. Then I went over to the closet and looked into it. No one and nothing were here. Then I turned around and looked all around the room again, ready to shoot if I have to; I also looked out the door. No one was inside the hall. Then I went over to the window and looked out of it. I didn't see anyone outside the house, and I didn't see or hear anything going on outside the house, either. Then I thought: Monteque must have gone out the window to escape and go get help, or he must have gone out the window so he could

around to the front of the house and go into the front door of the house and find and kill me--or maybe he had gone out the window and he was going to go through the window of one of the rooms here inside the hall and run through the room and step out of the room and into the hall and find and kill me. Quickly I went over to the door and peeked out of it. I didn't see anyone inside the hall; not even Monteque. Quickly I stepped into the hall and turned around and looked all around me as I walked through the hall to continue going to the front of the house, ready to shoot if I have to, and knowing that Monteque was going to find and kill me, or he was going to go get help.

I came into the foyer and stopped inside the foyer and looked all around me to see if Monteque or someone else or the both of them *were* in the foyer. No one *was* here in the foyer. Then, I noticed a door inside the foyer. I ran over to it and held my gun on it, and then I opened it to see what was behind

the door: a closet. Then, I came up with an idea. But first I looked around to make sure that Monteque or someone else or the both of them weren't going to see what I was going to do. No one saw me. Then, I got into the closet and closed the door, and then I opened the door just enough to peek out the door to see Monteque appear to kill me. Then, I saw Monteque walk through the front door of the house and into the foyer. He still had his gun in his hand. And the silencer was still on his gun. Then, I saw Monteque stop inside the foyer and look all around him. No doubt to watch out for me, then kill me the moment he sees me. Then--quickly--I pushed the door of the closet back and shot Monteque twice in the heart. Monteque fell down to the floor. I ran over to him and kicked the gun out of his hand and stuck the barrel of my gun into his head and checked his vitals to see if he were dead. He was. Then, I saw the front door of the house. It was open. I ran over to it and

peeked outside it. No one was around. Then I closed the door so no one outside the house would see what was going on inside the house now. Then I ran back to Whitcom's body so I could frisk it.

When I reached the body, I searched it. I found ID on it and looked at it: a black ID case with a private investigator's license and business cards in it. The name Pete Whitcom and Whitcom's face were on the private investigator's license, and the business cards said that Whitcom *was* a private investigator; I also found on the body a light brown unifold wallet with Whitcom's driver's license and other cards and cash inside the wallet. Then, I took one of Whitcom's business cards out of the ID case and took my wallet out of my purse and put the card in my wallet, and then I put my wallet back into my purse, and then I put both the ID case and Whitcom's wallet back into Whitcom's pockets, and then I ran out to and through the foyer, and then I opened

the front door of the house and stepped out of the house and closed and locked the door, and then I ran over to my car and unlocked it and got into it and started it up, and then I pulled away from Montrose's house.

CHAPTER XII

As I drove away from Montrose's place, I looked inside the rear view of my car to see how far away from Montrose's place I was right now. I saw his place getting smaller and smaller with each passing second. Until finally it was out of my sight. Then, I looked around for a good place to park at and call Apollo Bureau CHQ and talk to Mrs. Kincaid. I found it: someone's place close to town. I pulled up to the curb and parked my car here, and then I took my Apollo Bureau cell phone out of my purse and called Apollo Bureau CHQ.

Tina answered the phone.

"Hello," I said. "Tina?"

"Yes. This is Tina."

"It's Dahlia, Tina. Please scramble."

Then I heard Tina press the scrambler

button on her phone. Then Tina spoke to me again: "Scrambled."

"Is Mrs. Kincaid there?" I then asked Tina. "I need to talk to her."

"She is. I'll connect you to her."

Then I heard Tina make the connection.

"Hello," Mrs. Kincaid said when she came on. "Dahlia?"

"Yes, Mrs. Kincaid, it's Dahlia. I just stopped Montrose and locked down his computer and removed all of those CD's and the photographs of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars have been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account from Montrose's secret room. I imagine you'd like to see those CD's and the pictures and the papers?"

"Yes, I would."

"Well, I'm going over to CHQ right now."

"Good."

Then I told Mrs. Kincaid about the

conversation I had had with Montrose about my theory I had about why Sheila had been killed before I had stopped Montrose, and before his computer was destroyed, and before I had removed all of those CD's from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and before I had removed all of the photographs of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other from the secret room inside Montrose's study, and before I had removed all of the papers that said those installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account from the secret room inside Montrose's study.

"I see," Mrs. Kincaid said after I had finished. "Well, now we know she's dead and why, but we don't know where her body is. That's too bad."

"Yes, it is," Then I told Mrs. Kincaid that I had killed Monteque and Whitcom after I had stopped Montrose and after Montrose's computer was destroyed and after I had removed all of those CD's and the

photographs of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account from Montrose's secret room inside his study and why I had killed them. "I'd like to have a check run on Monteque and have a check run on this Whitcom," I told Mrs. Kincaid after I had finished. "The both of them had silencers on their guns when they tried to kill me, and because of that, I think they were working with those businessmen on conducting their criminal operations as well as Montrose worked with those businessmen on conducting those criminal operations, and I think they were working with Montrose on conducting Montrose's blackmail operations, too."

"I see. O.K. I'll see what I can do."

"Great. I'd also like to have Montrose's body and Monteque's body and Whitcom's body and their cars removed and put in places where they'll never be found. We

can't have them hanging around. If we *do* have them hanging around, they'll arouse suspicion."

"I understand. I'll see what I can do about *that."*

"Great."

"Anything else, Dahlia?"

"No, that's it. Bye."

"Bye," Then Mrs. Kincaid hung up.

So did I. Then I put my cell phone back into my purse, and then I started up my car so I could over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and talk to Mrs. Kincaid.

I was here at Apollo Bureau CHQ now. Inside Mrs. Kincaid's office and Mrs. Kincaid and I were sitting behind Mrs. Kincaid's desk and looking at those CD's I had removed from Montrose's secret room on Mrs. Kincaid's computer.

"So Montrose is blackmailing more people," Mrs. Kincaid said.

"Yeah," I agreed.

"He's making a lot of money off of these

people."

"Yeah. But the only person he's not making off of is Senator Ludlow. He put money into Senator Ludlow's bank account to make it look like Senator Ludlow was on the take as part of his plan to blackmail Senator Ludlow so Senator Ludlow won't investigate those businessmen."

"Of course. Well, once I give the President these CD's and the photographs of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying that several installments of a hundred thousand dollars were introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account and tell him what's on the CD's as well as tell him about the other information you got on Montrose's blackmail victims, and show him the flash drive you put that other information in, and tell the President we did what he wanted us to do, he'll turn all of this information over to Senator Ludlow, and then Senator Ludlow will arrest those businessmen and return to

the blackmail victims all of the money they gave Montrose."

"Yeah."

"We ran a check on Monteque and ran a check on this Whitcom. Monteque has been working for Montrose most of his life and has lived here in Washington all of his life. Before he worked for Montrose, he worked for another millionaire. Until one day that millionaire died from a heart attack. Then Monteque sought employment somewhere else and found Montrose and went to work for him. Whitcom has lived here in Washington all of his life, and he was a police officer before he became a private investigator."

"And then Montrose and the businessmen must have involved Monteque and Whitcom in what the businessmen are doing, and in what Montrose did."

"Yeah. And because of this, we'll need to investigate Monteque and Whitcom before I give the President that information on

Montrose's blackmailing all of those people and telling him we did what he wanted us to do, and then he tells Senator Ludlow what we did for him, and then Senator Ludlow arrests the businessmen and returns all of that money to the blackmail victims."

"In other words we tie up these loose ends before you turn that information over to the President and tell him we did what he wanted us to do, and before he tells Senator Ludlow what we did for him, and before Senator Ludlow arrests those businessmen and returns all of that money to the blackmail victims."

"That's right."

"I see. Well, *I* could go over to Whitcom's office and his home and search those places. I took one of his business cards out of his ID case and looked at it when I searched him. So I know where his office is, and I looked at Whitcom's driver's license in his wallet after I searched him, and it told me where Whitcom lived."

"Good idea. While you're doing that, we'll investigate Monteque."

"All right."

"We also removed Montrose's body and Monteque's body and Whitcom's body and their cars and put them where they'll never be found." Mrs. Kincaid didn't tell me how they had removed Montrose's body and Monteque's body and Whitcom's body and where they had taken them. How they had removed Montrose's body and Monteque's body and Whitcom's body and their cars and where they had taken them wasn't important.

"Great. Well. If there isn't anything else, I'll go search Whitcom's office and his home."

"No, there isn't. Good luck on the searches."

"Thank you, ma'am."

"You're welcome, Dahlia."

"Bye."

"Bye."

Then I collected my purse and left.

Whitcom's office was in downtown Washington. On 17th Street.

I was here at Whitcom's office now. I searched his office, but so far I didn't find anything in it that could tell me about what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had after Montrose had left the country club. Then I went over to Whitcom's safe here inside Whitcom's office to crack it. His safe was big and rectangular and against the wall. I cracked the safe. Then, I looked inside it. Then, I saw some pictures inside the safe. I took them out of the safe to look at them. They were copies of the pictures of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other. There were several copies of these pictures. Then I realized that Whitcom must have taken these pictures of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other, and had made copies of the pictures in case something would happen to

the originals. Then he had showed the originals to Montrose, and then Montrose had decided that these pictures of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other were going to help Montrose blackmail Bill. And then Montrose must have showed to Whitcom the statements of Bill's bank account saying that one hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account. And then Whitcom must have realized that the statements of Bill's bank account were going to help Montrose blackmail Bill as well as the photographs of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other were going to help Montrose blackmail Bill. And Montrose must have realized that the statements of Bill's bank account were going to help Montrose blackmail Bill as well as the photographs of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other were going to help Montrose blackmail Bill, too. And then Montrose must have found out that Bill was going to be at the President's daughter's wedding and had

gone over there and had showed Bill the original pictures of Bill and Sheila having sex with each other, and a copy of the statements of Bill's bank account saying that one hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account, and had told Bill that if Bill continued investigating the businessmen, he was going to show the pictures of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other to some people, and show the statements of Bill's bank account saying that one hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Bill's bank account, to the authorities.

I continued looking inside the safe for anything else that could tell me about what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had after Montrose had left the country club, but I couldn't find anything else inside the safe that could tell me about what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at

the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had after Montrose had left the country club. Then, I took my overcoat off and put the copies of the pictures of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other into the lining on the inside of my coat, and then I put my coat back on, and then I closed the door of the safe and spun the dial on the safe, and then I took a bug out of my purse and put it on the underside of the kneehole of Whitcom's desk, and then I tapped Whitcom's landline phone. I didn't think anything that would happen here at Whitcom's office would that have to do with what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had after Montrose had left the country club was going to happen, since Whitcom was dead now, but, just in case. Then, I tiptoed over to the front door of Whitcom's office and peeked out the door to see if the coast were clear. It was.

Then, I stepped out of Whitcom's office and closed and locked the door as quickly and silently as I could, and then I walked away from Whitcom's office instead of run away from it so I won't be noticed, and when I got outside Whitcom's office, I went to my car and got into it and started it up, and then I drove over to Whitcom's home to search that.

Whitcom's home was on 20th Street. It was a nice white one story house with a blue purple roof and matching garage.

I was driving away from Whitcom's home now. I had finished searching his place, but I hadn't found anything at it that could tell me about what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had after Montrose had left the country club; I had also bugged Whitcom's place and had tapped the landline phone there. I didn't think that something was going to happen at Whitcom's place that

would have had to do with what the President had seen Bill and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation that the President and Bill had had after Montrose had left the country club, since Whitcom was dead now, but, just in case. Now I was looking around for a good place to park at and call Apollo Bureau CHQ and talk to Mrs. Kincaid. I found it: the parking lot of a shopping center. I pulled into the parking lot of the shopping center and parked my car here, and then I took my Apollo Bureau cell phone out of my purse and called Apollo Bureau CHQ.

Tina answered the phone.

"It's Dahlia, Tina," I told Tina. "Is Mrs. Kincaid there?"

"Yes, she is. I'll connect you to her." Then she did.

"Hello," Mrs. Kincaid said. "Dahlia?"

"Yes. This is Dahlia, Mrs. Kincaid," Then I told Mrs. Kincaid I had gone over to Whitcom's office and had searched it and

what I had discovered there. "I have the copies of those pictures," I told Mrs. Kincaid after I had finished.

"Bring them in," Mrs. Kincaid told me. "I want to take a look at them."

"I'll do that. I also bugged Whitcom's office and tapped his landline phone. I don't think that anything that has to do with what the President saw Senator Ludlow and Montrose do at the country club, and about the conversation the President and Senator Ludlow had after Montrose left the country club, is going to happen at Whitcom's office, since Whitcom is dead, but, just in case."

"All right. Have you searched Whitcom's home?"

"Yes, I have," Then I told Mrs. Kincaid what I found at Whitcom's home and that I had bugged Whitcom's home and had tapped his landline phone at his home, and why I had bugged Whitcom's home, and why I had tapped his landline phone at his home.

"I see," Mrs. Kincaid said after I had finished. "Well, bring in the copies of the photographs so I can look at them. All right?"

"I'll do that. Anything else, ma'am?"

"No, that's it. Bye."

"Bye," Then I hung up and put my Apollo Bureau cell phone back into my purse, and then I started up my car and pulled out of the parking lot of the shopping center so I could go over to Apollo Bureau CHQ and give Mrs. Kincaid the copies of those pictures so she could look at them.

I was here at Apollo Bureau CHQ now. Inside Mrs. Kincaid's office. And Mrs. Kincaid and I were sitting behind Mrs. Kincaid's desk and looking at the copies of the pictures of Bill and Sheila Cole having sex with each other.

"So Whitcom made copies of these pictures and kept them in his safe," Mrs. Kincaid said.

"Yeah," *I* agreed. "No doubt Montrose

wanted Whitcom to make copies of these pictures in case something would happen to the originals."

"Yeah. And Whitcom must have been one of, or the only person, who took pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other as part of Montrose's plan to blackmail Senator Ludlow."

"Yeah. But if Whitcom *were* working with other people on taking pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other as part of Montrose's plan to blackmail Senator Ludlow, then these people must be long gone by now. Never to be found. Because of this, looking for them will be a waste of time."

"Yeah."

"Well, I think we've tied up all the loose ends. Now I can turn all of this information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars were introduced

into Senator Ludlow's bank account over to the President and have him take a look at the information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments had been introduced in Senator Ludlow's bank account, and then *he* can turn all of this information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account over to Senator Ludlow and have *him* take a look at the information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars was introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account, and then Senator Ludlow can arrest those businessmen and return all of that money to all of the blackmail victims."

"Yeah. I'll bet he's looking forward to

doing that."

"I'll bet he is, too. There won't be anything else *you* can do in the case. So what *you* can until you hear from me is go home and rest up and recuperate. I imagine you'll need to do that. It has been a tough case."

"Yes, ma'am, it has been. And you're right, ma'am, I *do n*eed to go home and rest up and recuperate. So if there isn't anything else, I'll go home and rest up and recuperate."

"No, there isn't. Bye, Dahlia."

"Bye, ma'am," Then I collected my purse and left.

CHAPTER XIII

A week later, I was here at Apollo Bureau CHQ. I had gone home and had rested up and had recuperated, but while I had done that, I hadn't called Jack and I hadn't told him I was back. I wanted to call him and tell him I was back after the assignment was over and if there were no new assignment after *this* assignment. Now I was inside Mrs. Kincaid's office and sitting in front of Mrs. Kincaid's desk, and Mrs. Kincaid was sitting behind her desk.

"Well, I gave the President all of that information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account," Mrs. Kincaid told me. "and

he looked at the information, and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other, and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account, but he didn't like what he saw, and then he gave that information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account to Senator Ludlow, and then Senator Ludlow looked at the information and the pictures of Senator Ludlow and Sheila Cole having sex with each other and the papers saying those installments of a hundred thousand dollars had been introduced into Senator Ludlow's bank account, but *he* didn't like what he saw, either. And then Senator Ludlow went and had the FBI arrest all of the businessmen and returned all of that money to all of the

blackmail victims."

"Well, that's nice," I said.

"Yes, it is. And after Senator Ludlow had all the businessmen arrested and returned all of the money to all the blackmail victims, he withdrew all of those installments of a hundred thousand dollars that Montrose had introduced put into his bank account from his bank and gave the money to a charity."

"Well, that was nice; not only that, he probably didn't want *that* money in his bank account. It'd remind him of what Montrose did."

Mrs. Kincaid nodded. "Well, the case is closed now," Mrs. Kincaid then said to me. "The President is very pleased. He said we did a good job. And Senator Ludlow is very pleased, too. He got to have all of those businessmen arrested."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it."

"So am I. And *you* get four weeks off for doing such a good job, Dahlia," Then Mrs.

Kincaid wrote something on a pad on her desk, and then she tore the paper off of the pad and gave the paper to me, and then she spoke to me again: "Just take that down to Accounting."

I looked at what Mrs. Kincaid had written on the paper. Then, I smiled and spoke to Mrs. Kincaid again: "Thank you, ma'am."

"You're welcome, Dahlia."

"Well, If there isn't anything else, I'll be on my way."

"No, there isn't. Have a nice vacation, Dahlia."

"I will. Bye."

"Bye."

Then I collected my purse and left.

I was here inside the parking lot of Apollo Bureau CHQ and here inside my car now. I had gone to Accounting after Mrs. Kincaid and I had had the debriefing session and had given one of the accountants in Accounting the voucher Mrs. Kincaid had

given me, and then the accountant had given me the money for my vacation, and then I had put the money in my purse and had left Accounting and had walked out of the Apollo Bureau CHQ building. Now I took out of my purse my personal cell phone and called Jack.

"Hello?" Jack said.

"Hello. Jack?" *I* said.

"Yes?"

"It's Dahlia, Jack."

"Dahlia. How are ya?"

"Fine. You?"

"Fine."

"Great. I'm back. I took care of that private matter."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it. When can I see you?"

"Anytime you want."

"How 'bout tonight? At eight o'clock? At your place?"

"I'll be my place at eight o'clock tonight."

"Great. See ya then."

"See ya then," Then I hung up and put my cell phone back into my purse and smiled. It was going to be great to see Jack again. Then I started up my car and drove out of the parking lot so I could go home.